













# Chapter 1: I Started Working At The Suzutsuki Family, But I Think I Already Reached My Limit

“...Ah, Onii-chaaan~ I was waiting for you~”

The following day after the sports festival—the 20th of September. With classes over, right as I came to the school gate all on my own, a voice as sweet as chocolate sundae called out to me.

“Come on, I was getting bored of waiting, you know? Let’s go home together, Onii-chan!”

“.....”

Honestly speaking, I was pretty lackluster. Can you blame me, this sweet and almost sickeningly cute voice has no right to call me ‘Onii-chan’. Am I hearing some hallucinations now? My god, I get that a lot of trouble happened yesterday after the sports festival, so I’m sure I must be tired to some degree, but to think that it would dwindle down my mental health this much. I should probably hurry up to take some Lipo\*itan D and recover my HP.

“Hmmm? Onii-chan, where are you going~?”

I fully ignored the voice who continuously annoyed me, and made my way home. Just act like I’m not hearing anything, and leave. Well, we’ll be going to the same ‘home’, so that won’t work out too well.

“Hey hey, Onii-chan~”

So persistent. What is this? Did I create some fantasy character that’s clinging to me now? Did I want a little sister that badly? I already have one, so that’s the problem? Well, she’s a wrestling maniac that

tortures me with wrestling techniques from morning to night.

“Onii-chan? Are you listening~?”

I sure am, I’m just too scared to turn around and look at you. Eh, why does this feel like some horror story now? Damn it, why a little sister? If it had to be a fantasy character, at least make it some rat bastard going ‘Hey, everyone!’, alright. Now that it’s come to this, I have to hurry home as quickly as possible. Once I make it there, this adorable little sister voice will come to an end as well. Or rather, I wouldn’t know what to do if it didn’t. Worst case scenario, I would have to get checked out at the hospital.

Right there, as I sped up with these thoughts in mind...

“Cobra!?” I involuntarily screamed out the name of a snake living in India.

Why? I was tackled. Someone rammed their body into my back. And then, their slender arms wrapped around my  
neeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeck!? I can’t breathe! Am I being choked by some actual cobra now?!

“Onii-chan, listen to me.”

This would be the time for them to take out a discount Dracula voice, saying ‘Give me your blood!’, but it turned out to be a cutesy anime TV show running Sunday morning...No, hold on. This voice suddenly sounds quite familiar...

“Urk...”

I somehow managed to turn my head with cracking sounds, only to find a single girl clinging to my back. She had semi-long silver hair, a super small stature, with sportive spats beneath her skirt, and a blouse tightly fitting her body—Narumi Schrödinger. She is the vice club president of the handicrafts club as well as an existence feared as the strongest at our school, currently about to crush my windpipe.

“S-Schrö-senpai...”

“Hmpf, finally looked at me, huh.”

She seemed to be satisfied with me calling out her name, as she got off my back. Immediately after, I started coughing violently. Normally, if a girl like her were to be this close to me, my gynophobia would activate, but for better or worse, this sleeper hold had my body busy enough. As proof of this, I wasn't even suffering from a nosebleed.

"W-What are you doing out of the blue like this..." I tried to get my breathing under control, and asked her.

In response, Schrö-senpai crossed her arms and started thinking.

"Skinship?"

"That sure is a violent type of skinship."

"Ahaha. Don't be so angry. You started this by ignoring me, even though I went out of my way to play the little sister as I promised." Schrödinger-san showed an innocent smile.

Grrr, she's not wrong. What am I talking about with a hallucination? I've gotten crazy for good. A genre doesn't suddenly jump to a fantasy from a high school life.

"Do you need something?"

"Am I not allowed to share a bit of skinship with my Onii-chan if I don't?"

"Not exactly, but...Also, could you drop that 'Onii-chan' already?"

"Ehhh, why, Onii-chan?" Schrö-senpai flapped her arms up and down like a protesting child.

Adding her small stature into the mix, she really looked like an adorable little sister, but there's actually a reason she addresses me as an Onii-chan. At the sports festival that happened yesterday, Schrö-senpai and I had decided on a competition. Although the results ended up a bit messy because of the circumstances, Schrö-senpai ended up calling me 'Onii-chan' as she does now.

"Do you not like being called Onii-chan?"

“Well...”

As a matter of fact, I have a bit of a trauma with being addressed that way. Whenever I hear ‘I love Onii-chan!’ back in the day, it surely ended up with me being used as a punching bag. It really doesn’t help that Schrö-senpai has a similar body stature to Kureha, which only worsens my flashbacks. **Shudders.**

“Then, maybe I should change that.”

“Change the way you’re calling me?”

“You dislike being called Onii-chan, right? Then, I just have to change that, and everything should be fine. Then, I can stay as your little sister.”

“.....”

No, that’s not the problem here. Also, why are you so adamant on being my little sister?

“Hmm...What would be best, I wonder?”

“You’re going at your own pace as always, I see.”

“That’s my strong point. So, what would you prefer?”

“I don’t really...”

“For your choices, you have Onii-chan, Onii-chama, Anii, Onii-sama, Onii-tama, Aniue-sama, Nii-sama, Aniki, Nii-kun, Niikun-sama, Nii-chama, Nii-ya, An-chan, and so on.”

“I feel like there’s too many choices in the mix!?”

“Best be careful. Besides one correct choice, all of them lead to a bad end.”

“Why does this feel like I’m playing a gal game now!?”

“That ain’t true~ Even if you choose the correct one, it’ll lead to a Dead End.”

“This ain’t some sound horror game!”

She sure does not make it easy for me...She’s not a sister princess at all.

“Well, leaving those jokes aside, hurry up and pick one, Onii-chan.”

“U-Um...Then, Anii, please.”

“...Wah, you actually chose that one.”

“You made it an option, right!?”

“But, Anii of all the choices...”

“Don’t be grossed out now. Would you rather call me ‘Onii-chama’, or ‘Onii-tama’, hm?”

“Well, those two are even more embarrassing.”

“Then, please call me Anii.”

“Urk...O-Okay, I’m doing it, alright?” Schrö-senpai muttered a faint ‘Anii, huh...’ to herself, and bit her lips with reddened cheeks.

Then, a brief silence followed. While trying her best to ignore her embarrassment, she pushed out a voice to the best of her ability.

“A...A...A...Anija!”

“Anija!? You’re not a guy, right!?”

“Anijaaaaaa! Anijaaaaaa!”

“Stop! Don’t scream that with your anime-like voice!”

Also, that wasn’t even a choice, right? That way of addressing me just makes you sound like a younger brother rather than a younger sister. Not to mention how antiquated it is.

“...Anija?”

“Using a cute voice doesn’t change anything.”



“Tsk. What’s the matter? Anija is definitely the best choice here~” Schrö-senpai complained.

...Yeah, I really don’t think I can win against her. Just talking to her makes me get mixed up in her pace. She’s another type of pushy compared to Suzutsuki, that I just can’t deal with.

“...So, what did you want? I seriously doubt you came all the way over here just to call me Anija, right?”

Now that it’s come to this, I’ll have to forcefully change the topic myself. Since all her grudges towards me should have been resolved during yesterday’s sports festival, there shouldn’t be any more reason for her to involve herself with me...

“The thing is, I wanted to talk about my little sister.”

“About Nakuru?” I returned this question, to which Schrö-senpai gave me a serious glare.

“Yesterday, you ignored Nakuru’s phone call, right?”

“Urk.” I froze up.

Oh yeah, I feel like Nakuru called me last night...

“I already heard about it, so spit it out.”

“I mean, I’ll apologize for ignoring her call, but...isn’t she calling me a bit too much?”

“You gonna blame her? She’s a maiden in love.”

“That doesn’t mean she can call me 120 times in a single day, you know!?” I complained, and pushed my phone screen onto her.

There, the entire list of calls was full of calls from ‘Glasses Junkie’. Before I realized it, I was too terrified to call her back. This most likely is related to the whole confession incident that happened during the closing ceremony of the sports festival. There, Nakuru desperately confessed her feelings for me. Normally, that would be the happy-go-lucky normie debut I had always waited for, but reality

isn't as kind.

After all, the reason that Nakuru wanted to go out with me was none other than to simply observe me. Or in simpler words, she wanted to get material for her BL works. With how motivated she is, I wouldn't be surprised if she started keeping a diary or something like that. Seton's 'Wild Animals I have Known', Fabre's 'Book of Insects', and Nakuru has her Book of BL. For people with her interests, it would probably turn into a new bible. Of course, knowing her peculiar fetish, I immediately rejected her, but...

"Nakuru still hasn't given up on you, alright. If anything, she's falling in love with you even more."

"If so, then she could have just written an email or something like that, right?"

"That's what I argued as well, but she said 'It's embarrassing to write Senpai lots of mails!', and kept on calling you."

"She sure is shy during the weirdest times..."

"Well, she can be embarrassed at times. She even asked me for advice yesterday."

"Advice?"

"She said 'Nakuru can't talk with Senpai when she looks at his glasses...', you know."

"....."

Well. Normally you'd say 'in his eyes', right? Maybe it was just Schrö-senpai who misspoke right now. Even that glasses junkie would properly look at my eyes when we're.....

"She apparently is too focused on the shape of your glasses, and can't focus on the conversation."

"Are you serious!?"

"Hm? Or was she interested in the thickness of the lenses?"

“Who cares about that!?”

“Anyway, she apparently has a lot of trouble talking to you without being engrossed by our glasses. That seemingly has her getting nervous.”

“.....”

It’s a terminal illness. That was the first thought that popped up in my head. She’s done for. It’d be best to send her to a hospital, and give her a surgery done by Black \*ack-sensei himself.

“I’m sorry, I’ll apologize later for not answering the phone calls. I was just a bit busy yesterday.”

“Huh, did something urgent come up?”

“Something like that, yeah.”

Telling her what happened to my home crossed the line a bit, so I kept my words vague. Especially more so considering where I’m currently staying. Also, I definitely can’t tell her. Imagine this spread inside the school.

“Hmpf, I’ll leave it at that then today. I do have faith in you after all.”

“?”

What’s that supposed to mean? Did I do something that would warrant this much trust? If anything, we’ve been on awful terms before the culture festival.

“I mean, you’re keeping Usamin after all.”

“Huh?”

Usamin...she’s talking about Usami Masamune, right.

“Ever since she met you, she has changed a bit. Before, she pretty much ignored everybody who tried talking to her, but recently she’s opened up a lot more. Rumours say that you took her in to become

like that.”

“Rumours...”

“Disciplining?”

“I’m not doing anything like that.”

“Training?”

“Not training either!”

“Ehh, then what did you do? You fed her some carrots?”

“Not at all. She’s not an actual rabbit after all.”

“Right~ I tried to feed her carrots as well, and she got angry at me.”

“You actually tried that!?”

“Usamin said ‘Stop fooling around, Did you think you could win me over with carrots!?’ but she ate it in the end.”

“She ate it in the end!?”

Maybe that’s why she stopped talking altogether? Though I’m sure Schrö-senpai just did it as a well-meant joke. However, I’m not doing anything special. I’m not talented or skilled enough to simply change people like that, and neither am I as clever as Suzutsuki. That’s why, we’re just simple friends. That’s about the best I could do. Though, I’m happy if that led to Masamune changing a bit. Also, now that I think about that...

“I see how it is.”

“Hm?”

“Schrö-senpai, you’re more caring than you initially lead people to believe.”

That’s the vice club president for you, I guess. She’s keeping Masamune in check, and is liked enough by people to be the sports festival executive president. Also, if she only were to fix this wild

personality of hers, she might just be a perfect senior.

“Hanya!?”

However, the Schrö-senpai in question suddenly let out a baffled voice resembling a small animal, staring at me in disbelief.

“M-Moron! D-D-D-Dummy! What are you blurting out so nonchalantly?!”

“Eh? I just said what I felt, though?”

“Shhh...S-Shut up! I don’t like being praised!”

“How can you dislike that...”

“I sure do! I absolutely hate it when people praise me or pat my head!!” Schrö-senpai blushed furiously as she glared up at me.

...I might be wrong about this, but...

“Are you...embarrassed?”

“Huuuh!? Why the hell would I embwawassed!”

Ah, she bit her tongue...She’s so easy to see through. I clearly hit bullseye with that. Ahh, I didn’t expect that. To think Schrö-senpai of all people would be such a bashful person. However...what is this sensation? If I were to give it a manga-esque explanation, it’s like your rivaling female character suddenly turned into your ally, and is just always going in full dere mode. A dere Schrödinger-san...Or, Deredinger-san for short...

“.....”

Oh crap, she’s so adorable. I feel like teasing her a bit now...

“Ah, stop that, will you!”

Without even asking for permission, I simply put my hand on Schrö-senpai’s head. And then, I moved it up and down, left and right.

“Funyaaa...I-I told you to stop...” She spoke like a kitty that got high

on catnip, her resistance growing weaker and weaker.

Waaah, the gap to her usual attitude is crazy! My gynophobia is slowly flaring up again, but I can't help wanting to touch her more like this.

"You really are a reliable senior, Schrö-senpai."

"Unya!?"

"You care about your juniors."

"A-Again, stop praising me..."

"That's a third-year for you, and the vice club president, you're the leader that will bring us to a new world."

"Y-You bastard, if you keep going like this..."

"Eh, what? I couldn't hear you."

"~~~!?" When I rubbed her head even stronger, her face turned as red as a tomato. "Unyaaa~!?"





Ohhh, this is it, Deredinger-san. She's even holding back on her usual forceful attitude, and is now acting like a docile cat.

“Urk...”

However, I'm also getting close to my limit. My nose will start bleeding any second now. Alright, I got to enjoy lots of Deredinger-san, so I'll leave it at this for now—

“Senpai, what are you doing to Onee-chan?”

Suddenly, I heard a familiar voice. When I turned around with stiff movement, standing there was a girl with cat ears and glasses, possessing a physique the exact opposite of Schrö-senpai—It was the one and only glasses junkie, Narumi Nakuru. She looked at me petting her older sister’s head with dampened eyes.

“.....”

Oh crap. I don’t know why, but it feels like another Ice Age arrived...

“N-Nakuru?”

For now, I put my hand away, and tried to reason with this junior of mine.

“Um...since when were you watching?”

“It should be around the time you said ‘Then, please call me Anii’...”

What awful timing! She was probably watching us from the shadows, right!?

“Uuuu...you’re cruel, Onee-chan. Being lovey-dovey with Senpai...”

“Wha...Calm down, my little sister! That bastard did it without my consent!”

“But...you looked pretty happy, Onee-chan...”

“That’s...well...you know...”

“Uwaaaaaaaah!”

“Ah, don’t just start crying!”

“Not fair...You said you’d support Nakuru...you traitor! Now that it’s come to this...!”

“...!?”

For a second, I failed to grasp what was going on, as Nakuru

suddenly leaped at Schrö-senpai.

“N-Nakuru, you...!”

Even Schrö-senpai was taken by surprise, her reaction belated. Nakuru used that moment to take out a bottle filled with coke, opened it up, and shoved it into Schrö-senpai’s mouth.

“Mguh!?”

The contents gushed down Schrö-senpai’s mouth...What is going on? What did she just do?

“Fufu, you leave Nakuru no other choice. From here on out, you will see Onee-chan’s different side!”

“W-What do you mean?”

“Put simply, it will be a shameful sight for her.” Nakuru flashed a devilish grin, and started explaining. “Normally, Onee-chan is always brimming with energy and a dependable person, but...she has one decisive weakness.”

“Weakness?”

“Fufu, that is...”

—*When Onee-chan drinks carbonated drinks, she’ll get drunk.*

That’s what Nakuru declared.

“She gets drunk off carbonic acid...?”

Wasn’t that your weakness? Well, they’re blood-related sisters, so they must share some kind of similarity.

“As for the details, it would be best for you to see it yourself.” With these words, Nakuru pulled the bottle out of Schrö-senpai’s mouth.

“N-Nakyuru, you...” Schrö-senpai’s articulation suddenly changed.

Her cheeks grew red, and her eyes seemed drowsy. It seems like she really got drunk off the carbonic acid. But, what about it? What is

Nakuru planning with this? She probably wants to lessen my impression of Schrö-senpai by showing me one of her embarrassing sides. But, that right now isn't nearly enough.

“.....Ish hot.”

“Eh?”

What did she just say? Right when I wanted to ask for confirmation, Schrö-senpai suddenly took off the spats she was wearing.

“Wah, what are you doing!?”

“Eh? But, ish hot, sho...” After taking off her spats, the girl now put her hands on her uniform, and...Waaaah, don't take that off!

I reflexively grabbed Schrö-senpai's arm, and pushed her down in order to restrain her movement.

“Hmpf, what are you doing, Onii-chan. I can't take off my clothes like this...” She glared up at me, trying to shake off my hand.

However, she couldn't muster up enough strength to achieve this. Is it because of her being intoxicated?

“This is Onee-chan's weakness.” The only person calm and rational about this was Nakuru, flashing a satisfied smile. “You know how Nakuru wants to take off other people's clothes when she gets drunk on carbonated drinks, right? Onee-chan is the opposite. She—can't help herself with wanting to take off her own clothes!”

“What's that even...”

That's such a chore. Nakuru's Drunken Undressing Fist was already a pain, but Schrö-senpai is even more dangerous. Right now, I'm restraining a half-naked loli girl. If someone saw me like this... actually they already are, since we're still at the school. If this continues for much longer, I'll probably get arrested.

“Hehehe! It's Onee-chan's fault for betraying Nakuru! Be more embarrassed as Senpai gets to see every part of you!”

As if that wasn't enough, this glasses junkie made things only worse. She totally lost herself, and started laughing like a maniac. The scenery just now must have been that big of a shock for her. But, there's still no need to go that far, right? Women are scary.

"Nakuru! Help me! At this rate, Schrö-senpai will strip completely!"

"It's fine. Once she ends up completely naked, Nakuru will offer up her glasses."

"Eh? Seriously? That's good to...Wait, how does that help!?"

"Just kidding. However, rest assured. Speaking from experience, she won't take off her underwear at least."

"That's not the problem here!"

"It's not? ...Ah!? Don't tell me, are you hoping to have your way with Onee-chan's loli body!?"

"Alright, you shut your mouth for a second!"

Her fantasies were running full speed ahead with no brakes in sight. She seems like she'd jump off the cliff if I told her.

"Let go of me! I'm going to take off my clothes!"

The situation quickly accelerated towards the bad, as Schrö-senpai started to grow more violent. Because she was still drunk, she failed to muster up any strength, but I was starting to grow weaker because of my gynophobia.

"Damn it...!" Even as I was grumbling these words, I felt the strength leave my arms.

As a result of this, Schrö-senpai's arm managed to reach her skirt—

"Jirou, what exactly am I looking at?"

What rang out was an awfully cold and freezing alto voice. When I directed my gaze over towards the voice, I spotted a familiar silhouette. It was a student wearing a uniform different from the one

normal students wore, designed to look like a butler's uniform—Konoe Subaru.

She must have passed here by mere coincidence, but our school's prince gave me a condescending look.

“Konoe! Save me! I need your help to get out of this!”

“Help...in what way?”

“You can tell by looking, right!? Schrö-senpai's clothes are—”

There, I realized. I reconfirmed the current situation. Right now, I was holding down (or from an outsider's perspective pushing her down) Schrö-senpai, who was blushing furiously, half her clothes were taken off (not to mention her loli physique), so things couldn't look worse.

“.....”

Huh? Now that I look at the situation, isn't this pretty bad...?

“K-Konoe, you're wrong. Calm down. This is a misunderstanding. That's right, this isn't what it looks like. Take a deep breath. There's no way I would force myself on Schrö-senpai, nor am I interested in her loli body, I'm simply trying to save Schrö-senpai from embarrassment...” I desperately tried to make up excuses, as I felt my temperature get lower and lower.

“...Jirou.”

**Grin**, Konoe showed an unnatural yet angelic smile. “I will show you my certain kill technique now.”

“D-Don't tell me...”

“Yeah. I was trying to show you when we first met, but I held back regarding the circumstances.”

She was declaring my imminent death. And then, she formed a small fist, raising it towards the sky...



“End of Earth.”

There, with a skill name so ridiculous, the world in front of me vanished instantaneously.



♀ × ♂

Thinking about it, the misfortune began with the fire that burned

down half of my house. Because a telephone pole caught fire, the calamity happened. Our beloved home was unusable. Kureha and I lost our place we belong to. However, life isn't always evil. As we stood in front of our house's remains, with absolute luck, my phone vibrated, it being a phone call from Mom.

Naturally, since she was on her travels to become even stronger by fighting people overseas, she is not in Japan. From her end, it apparently happened simply on a whim, but to us it was a saving grace amidst this hell. After explaining the circumstances, Mom contacted the fire insurance, and it was decided that our home would be rebuilt. However, that naturally wouldn't work in a day.

Since it was only burned down about half-way, there were a lot of things that only had to be fixed briefly, but it would still take a solid two months to make it inhabitable again. In other words, my little sister and I ended up stranded in this concrete jungle. What a day full of twists and turns.

However, that wasn't the end of our road. The person who offered us a helping hand was one other than Lady Suzutsuki Kanade. She offered to let us stay over at her residence. It was yet another saving grace...but to me, it looked more like the devil's contract. After all, she brought up a condition, which forced me to work as her servant for the duration of our stay. As a result, we were kept as pets by Suzutsuki Kanade.

"Hey, Konoe, will you finally cheer up already?"

We stood in front of the Suzutuski Family's main gate, and I called out to my pouting butler.

"I already explained everything, right? That was Schrö-senpai suddenly stripping for no reason, okay?"

After that previous incident, I was hit with Subaru-sama's certain kill technique, and got knocked out in one solid hit. Seriously, End of Earth sure is amazing, my view just turned blank, and it felt like the earth just exploded. I even thought of my testament. Once my consciousness returned, Nakuru quickly explained that everything was just a misunderstanding. Immediately after, Nakuru was dragged

off by the still drunk Schrö-senpai with ‘Naaakuuuruuuuuu, punishment time~’, and they disappeared in the distance. No clue what’s going on with them, but I’m sure it’ll be some good medicine for that glasses junkie.

Either way, after everything was resolved, Konoe and I headed to the Suzutsuki Residence, but...

“Shut up. It’s your fault for getting wrapped up in that, you tried to go home alone after all.”

Even though everything should have been resolved, Konoe still was in as much of a bad mood as before. It seems like she really didn’t like the fact that I wanted to head home myself.

“I mean, you were asked to help Sensei, right?”

“Urk...T-That is true, but...” Konoe pouted even more aggressively.

There is a reason that I was planning on heading home alone, which was because Konoe was asked for some assistance after classes by our homeroom teacher. Can’t blame her for that, since honor students tend to get a lot of trust and responsibility from the teachers.

On a side note, Suzutsuki was absent today. Not to mention not on a sick notice, but rather because she apparently had something urgent to attend to at her residence. Kureha was all ‘Maybe she’s preparing a welcome party for us!’ with sparkling eyes, but knowing that rich lady, there’s no way that’s happening. And I’d be willing to bet on that.

“Since our way home is the same, you might have as well waited for me...” Konoe muttered, still as displeased as before.

“I’m sorry, okay? Next time, I’ll make sure to wait.”

“...Really?”

“Yeah, promise.”

“You better keep that. If you lie, I’ll have to destroy earth again.”

“Yeah, yeah. But more importantly, there’s something I want to confirm.” I asked, as we set on the plot of the Suzutsuki Household.

Leading from the gate was a large garden, giving off a dense bourgeoisie feeling as there were trees and flower beds guiding our way.

“Today, Kureha and I will be introduced to the other servants at the Suzutsuki Household, correct?”

“Yup. The young lady should have prepared a location for this already. With how much she was going around, I didn’t even have time to meet her.”

We’ve already stayed over at the Suzutsuki Residence yesterday, but we have yet to meet the other servants working there. Since we’d start working today, they also decided this day to be the first meeting.

“So, because your old man is with Suzutsuki’s parents, he won’t be home right now, yeah?”

“That’s right. He at least won’t be back during the time you’re staying over.”

“Great timing. If he was here as well, I probably wouldn’t be allowed to leave alive.”

Konoe Nagare, who I call old man or old fart, is still under the suspicion that there’s something going on between me and his beloved daughter. If he knew that I was working at the Suzutsuki Residence, he would be against it, so at least that is out of my way.

“...I don’t think it’ll be that much easier even without him.” Konoe muttered with a grim expression.

Hold on, what’s that reaction for? Are you telling me that there’s other servants who are as troublesome?

“More importantly, you have to be careful, Jirou.”

“Hm? About what?”

“Isn’t that obvious? Make sure that the other servants of the residence don’t find out about the fact that you know my secret. If they figure it out, I’ll have to quit as the young lady’s butler.”

“...Ah.”

I see, I totally forgot, but if the people at the school find out that Konoe is a girl, she’ll have to quit as Suzutsuki’s butler. However, I’m already an exception. I’ve been keeping the fact of me knowing it a secret myself...Well, the old man does know, but he’s keeping it a secret for his daughter’s sake.

“Be careful, okay? If someone from the residence realizes that you know about my secret, the young lady will immediately kick you out. If I have to quit as her butler, she probably won’t even care about protecting her promise of helping you.”

“...Hmm.”

Back in April, Suzutsuki and I shared the promise of ‘I’ll keep Konoe’s secret to me, so you two help me with my gynophobia’. Basically, it’s a shared contract. That’s why, if Konoe has to quit as a butler, Suzutsuki has no more reason to help me.

“That’s why, the best is that ‘Jirou and Kureha-chan became servants without knowing my secret’, see.”

“So basically, I’m supposed to act like I don’t know anything.”

“Indeed. Or, there’s also the option that you find out after you became servants at the residence. The rule is that nobody from school finds out, but the servants at the residence are an exception.”

“...Sounds difficult. Basically, it’s a time delay trick? I’ll act like I found out about your secret after becoming your servant.”

“Yeah. Though, that would mean Kureha-chan also finds out about it...”

“That’ll make things a whole lot more complicated.”

Kureha’s head over heels for Subaru-sama after all. She might just

break down from the shock of finding out that Konoe is a girl. Or, she'll get violent. I don't even want to imagine that. If she goes crazy, I doubt even the military can stop her.

"You don't need to think about it too deeply. What's important is that no other servant finds out that you already learned of my secret."

"...Got it, I'll be careful."

Right as we stopped talking, a young voice called out to us.

"Nii-san! Konoe-senpaaaaai!"

Talk about the devil, I guess. Kureha started running towards us from behind my back. Seems like her classes just ended as well. Since Schrö-senpai and Nakuru left early, I guess they didn't have any club today.

"Alright, now that everyone's here, let's enter together."

"Y-Yes! Understood!"

I guess even Kureha is nervous in this situation. Well, the first impression is the most crucial after all, and I can't relax either. I'll be working here for the next two months, so I need to not mess things up at the first meeting. In front of my eyes was the large entrance of the residence. It was a Western residence several times bigger than my home, belonging only to the Suzutsuki Family. And starting today, I'll be fighting here.

"...Phew." I took a deep breath to steady my feelings.

And then, I carefully put my hand on the doorknob.

"—I've been expecting you, Jirou-kun."

A dignified voice greeted me. Upon opening the door, there stood a girl with a goth uniform, her black hair tied up into twintails—She is my master starting today, Suzutsuki Kanade.

"Now, come with me to the reception room. I have to introduce you and Kureha-chan to the other servants after all." Suzutsuki walked



down the hallway, seemingly delighted.

Seems like the other servants have been waiting for us.

“Konoe, how many other servants besides you and your old man are working here?”

“There’s one chef, as well as two maids. Today, you’ll be meeting one of the maids. The other maid had to be hospitalized.”

“Hospitalized?”

“Because of an appendix.”

“Ouch, that sucks. What about the chef?”

“She, well, was wrapped up in an unfortunate accident...” Konoe suddenly grew quiet with a gloomy face.

...Ah, crap. Did I step on an uncomfortable topic? Looking at her expression, it must have been something quite unlucky and severe. Was he hit by a Romero Special<sup>1</sup> I wonder? No, such things only happen in the Sakamachi Family. But then, what...

“It really was an unfortunate accident. Because of my Butler Knuckle, she ended up hospitalized.”

“So you’re the aggressor!?”

“Don’t blame Subaru, Jirou-kun. It was Kosame’s fault.”

“Kosame?”

“The name of the chef. Samejima Kosame. She is a bit...no, quite different from normal people.”

“Different...?”

“She’s a yankee, a pervert, and an extreme lolicon.”

“She’s a failure of society!?” I subconsciously screamed.

Here, Suzutsuki moved closer to me, and whispered.

“Also, she really loves girls that are like little sisters.”

“.....”

“She really has talent when it comes to cooking though. However, as she loves cute girls more than anything, she tends to be a bit assertive towards Subaru. The other day, things escalated and she ended up hospitalized.”

“But, for her to be hospitalized, it had to be something severe, right?”

“Well, to give you a brief summary of what happened: ‘Subaru-taaan!’ ‘Wha, Kosame! Don’t touch me there!’ ‘I wanna lick you! Lick you all over! Lickie lickie Subaru-tan!’ ‘Unyaaaaaa!’ and that’s how she ended up.”

“Let that pervert stay hospitalized forever!”

Why not get her head checked out while she’s there already? Or, send her to a medical treatment facility for rehab?

“It was a surreal scenery. Subaru couldn’t handle the sexual harassment anymore, and sent Kosame flying with her Butler Knuckle, to which Kosame let out a delighted ‘Ahiii!?’ voice, and clung to Subaru again. Rinse and repeat several times...”

“What an awful endless loop.”

“After around 30 times, Kosame’s strength gave out. Well, because this kind of exchange happens almost on a daily basis, she’s got a sturdy body at this point.”

“.....”

“That being the case, she’s currently hospitalized. The biggest reason is overwork. After eating so many of Subaru’s punches, she still didn’t suffer any severe injuries.”

“Maybe she’d come to my place if I asked her?”

I want her to take over as Kureha’s punching bag. She looks like a loli little sister on the outside, so she must be in that woman’s strikezone.

“That reminds me, Subaru. I asked the doctor to do a CT scan on Kosame’s brain, but they didn’t find any results.”

“Young lady, maybe we should have gone with the MRI as I suggested? I won’t accept that she does not suffer from any brain injury.”

“You really have no faith in her, I see.”

I genuinely feel like Konoe can’t be blamed for using her Butler Knuckle here. If anything, she’s clearly on the righteous side of things. Normally, you’d report a person like that to the police, if not worse. Not to mention that, because we were whispering right now, Kureha’s curious about us now. It’d be bad if she found out about Konoe being a girl.

“Well, that’s why the chef is currently hospitalized.”

“So we’ll only be meeting the maid today, right.”

I honestly expected there to be more people. Judging from my manga and anime experience, I was waiting for a full-blown reception with twenty or more people.

“Don’t worry, you’ll get along just fine.” Suzutsuki-san smiled with a cheerful grin.

That smile only terrified me more. After all, she stopped being Deretsuki-san, and moved up a notch to turn into Yamitsuki-san. Even yesterday, she called me her dog, so if I’m not careful, she might put a leash on me, taking me for a stroll.

“Then, it’s time for you to meet each other—Subaru.”

“Yes. Understood, young lady.” Konoe seemed to take the role of the servant, and put her hand on the doorknob.

Moments later, the door slowly opened. What greeted us was a stylish hall of sorts, with antique furniture. Standing in the center of this was a girl with long hair that reached down to her waist, together with a void expression on her face, like she wore a mask. It was a maid, a real maid. On top of her glossy wine-red hair, she had a maid’s

hairband, with a maid uniform full of frills everywhere. It was a strong contrast between black and white. Everything about her looked like a true maid, except one, which was an irregularity for a normal person—an eyepatch.

“.....”

The heck is that? Because of her hair, I couldn't fully see it, but it was an eyepatch or eye bandage on her left eye. However, it's not one you'd get from a doctor. It looks like it could come straight out of the movie called 'Apocalypse Now'.

“Let me introduce you.” Suzutsuki spoke up upon entering the banquet hall. “This is one of my maids, Saotome Ichigo. Ichigo, please introduce yourself to Jirou-kun and Kureha-chan.”

“Understood, Kanade-ojousama.”

After the girl spoke up with a robotic voice, she walked towards me first. And then, she showed a polite bow.

“Good day, Odd Jobs-san, my name is Saotome Ichigo, nice to meet you.”

“...Nice to meet you too.”

That 'Odd Jobs-san' caught my attention, but for now I followed suit, and lowered my head towards her as well. Looking at her from up close, she gave off quite the mature atmosphere. Age-wise, she might be in university? Either way, I have to get along with her, as I'll be in her care. The more allies, the better. The eyepatch might just be some avant-garde fashion for all I know, but there's no way that she's a lolicon and pervert like the other person.

“Odd Jobs-san, there is one thing I would like to tell you.”

There, as I was still busy with my thoughts of the girl in front of me, the eyepatch maid suddenly took out—A chainsaw. It looked like one used by a serial killer in a splatter movie. No clue where she took that out from, but she pointed at me with zero hesitation—or rather, at my neck.

“It’s fine.” The girl, Saotome Ichigo, said with a lack of expression as always. “It might look like a chainsaw, but the blade has been taken out entirely. It’s also spinning much slower, so I can’t cut anything with this. It’s a dull chainsaw.”

“.....”

“However, if I put on the engine and press it against your skin, the friction will burn your skin. You’ll scream in agony. It might not be lethal, but I can still use it as a weapon to punish you.”

“.....”

“Everything would have been fine if you were a girl. I would have treated you more kindly. However, you’re a man, so things are different.”

“.....”

“One last thing to tell you. If you dare to lay even one finger on Kanade-ojousama, I will not forgive you. Because I...LOVE Kanade-ojousama.” Despite speaking of such fond emotions, her voice was robotic and cold from the beginning to the end.

After showing another polite bow, she then moved on to Kureha, and gave her a calm ‘Hello’ greeting...Well, you know. It seems like there’s a lot of peculiar people working here, for sure. It’s fine, the beginning might be a bit rough, but I’ll get used to it. I’ll have to put my faith in this, and live on. Staying positive in life is most crucial after all.

“Fufu, that concludes this enjoyable self-introduction time.” I heard Suztsuki’s delighted voice.

Since I was still shocked, I could only stand immovable, whereas Ichigo-san and Kureha finished greeting each other.

“Ichigo, could you show Kureha-chan to her room? She stayed in the guest’s room yesterday, but starting today, we’ve prepared a servant room.”

“Understood, Kanade-ojousama.” Ichigo-san took Kureha with her,

and left the hall.

“Jirou, you okay?”

I must have shown a horrible face, because Konoe came talking to me with a truly worried expression.

“I’m sure you must have understood it with that, but Ichigo is a bit weird. As long as you don’t do anything to the young lady, she’s just your average maid...I think.”

“...Got it, thanks for the help.”

You truly are my only ally here, Subaru-sama. You’re like my shining light amidst this darkness I find myself in. Though, that ‘I think’ is scaring me.

“Jirou-kun, your room is over here. Let me show you there. Subaru, please bring his uniform with you.”

“Uniform...?”

“Yes. It took me an entire day to make it. It’ll be Jirou-kun’s working uniform. It’s in my room, so could you bring it to me?”

“...Yes, understood.”

With the order of her master, Konoe left the hall, leaving behind only me and Suzutsuki Kanade. In this situation, she’s my master.

“So, what do you think about my maid?”

“She’s left quite the impression, that’s for sure.”

“Fufu, don’t you worry, you’ll get used to her right away. Now, let’s go, I’ll take you to your room.”

That damn Devil Suzutsuki, she’s clearly enjoying my reactions. While mentally cursing her, we walked down the hallway away from the banquet hall. Well, whatever. She might be a maid holding a murder weapon who LOVES Suzutsuki, but that’s no biggie. It’s nothing compared to the spartan training by Mom that I had to suffer

through.

Not to mention, I can actually sleep here. Even the guest room yesterday was amazing. It felt like I was sleeping on marshmallows. In that sense, this here is paradise. No matter how cruel my work may be, at least I can get some proper sleep.

“Over here.”

With this positive mindset, I followed Suzutsuki down the hallway, and.....Hm? Weird, why are we stepping out into the garden?

“I’m sorry, Jirou-kun.” Before I could ask anything, Suzutsuki opened her mouth. “I’m sure you knew, but you’ll be a servant working here starting today, not a guest. And, you are also the only man at this residence right now.”

“.....”

“It’s not that I don’t have any faith in you. However...Ichigo was against sleeping in the same house as you.”

“...I see, so that’s why **this**, right.”

“That’s right, **this**.”

Tracing Suzutsuki’s gaze, standing in the corner of the garden was a single—tent. It was a green tent you’d use for camping. It seems like this thin layer of protection will be my room from now on.

“.....”

Don’t look down on me, alright. I’m not that much of a choosing beggar that I would complain about this. Normally, I wouldn’t even have any place to stay, so I should be thankful. Not to mention that I can understand the concerns of not letting a boy stay in a house full of women. No biggie at all. I just have to gain their trust starting now. I can still return to that marshmallow bed. Once a week’s over, I get used to this life...

“Um, young lady...” There, an alto voice interrupted our conversation.

Turning around, there stood Konoe, carrying something in her arms.

“Yes, Subaru?”

“I went to your room, but this is the only thing resembling a uniform that I could find...”

“It’s fine, that’s exactly what I was talking about.”

“But, isn’t this...” Konoe gave me an apologetic look.

I looked at what she carried. It was a costume, not to mention one that looked like a dog. It seems like this will be my working attire.

“I told you right, Jirou-kun. I’ll have you become my dog.”  
Suzutsuki’s face looked awfully serious, as she offered me the costume. “Welcome to the Suzutsuki Family. As the master of this residence, I welcome you.”

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1 A grappling technique from History’s Strongest Disciple Kenichi





# Chapter 2: Together with the Young Lady

“Suzutsukiiiiiiii!?” I screamed with a voice that it reached even the deepest parts of the residence.

Even I reached my limit with this.

“What’s wrong, Jirou-kun? Why are you screaming like that?”

“Don’t give me that! You’re clearly taking things too far now! Why do I have to sleep in a tent, while wearing a dog costume as my working uniform!?” All the displeasure came gushing out at once.

You wouldn’t be treated this badly even if you worked at a black company. I can only hope to improve my situation with a labour strike.

“Can’t help it then, I’ll reconsider your working conditions.”

“Meaning?”

“You can stay in a small dog hut, but naked.”

“That’s even worse!”

“But, it costs 10.000 yen for one meal.”

“...Eh?”

“Of dog food.”

“At least treat me like a human being, will you!?”

“Ahahahahaha!”

“Don’t you dare laugh at me!”

Damn Devil Suzutuski, she was probably waiting for my retort this

entire time, right. She was waiting for me to get angry after throwing all this unreasonability at me. Man, isn't she motivated.

"Also, what's with this costume?"

"Don't blame me. Here at the Suzutsuki Family, the butler is a special existence, and the proof of that is the butler uniform, so we can't just have any person wear it."

"That doesn't mean..."

"Ichigo and I did our best making it. She's really good at this minor work. Since the fabric is thin, it's easy to move in, and I'm certain it would look great on you."

"Eh? Really?"

"Of course. Why not try it on?"

"...A-Alright."

I was still filled with doubts, but I still accepted the costume, and put it on. It's designed like a hoodie, but I can properly show my face, so I can see ahead of me just fine...Hm? The fabric feels great, and it's warm. Did they pay a lot of this? Oh man, I might actually like this. I don't think I would want to take this off.

"I forgot to tell you, but once you put that costume on, you can't take it off again."

"Seriously!?"

"Indeed. Once you pull up the zipper, it becomes immovable with an automatic lock."

"Impossible...Ah, you're right! I can't take it off anymore!"

"By the way, in order for you to take it off, you need the remote that I'm holding."

"Give it to me then! Give me the remote!"

“Fine then. Catch!”

“Don’t throw iiiiiiit!”

How far do you plan on treating me as a dog? Because she threw the remote like a frisbee, I had to chase after it. I managed to catch it though, so a fine play on my mind. With this, I can open up the zipper...

“Wait, huh?”

Why are there so many buttons on the remote...

“Be careful Jirou-kun, that costume has a lot of functions.”

“A lot of functions?”

“It has a lot of wonderful functions. All of the buttons on that remote are like switches.”

“But, how am I supposed to tell which button will open up the zipper?”

“Yes, I’m sorry, I actually forgot to write information on the buttons. The best you can do is try out every single button.”

“.....”

That was on purpose. Definitely, definitely on purpose. There’s no way she’d be this clumsy. However, I can’t keep wearing this costume. I just went and pressed a random button, but...

“...? Nothing is happening.”

“What a shame, that’s the button that will blow up your home.”

“Blow up!?”

“Right now, your home should be in tatters.”

“Youuuuuuu!?”

“Just kidding, it’s just a blank button. Didn’t your house burn down

yesterday?”

“It didn’t burn down entirely, okay!”

It only burned down halfway. That’s important, so keep that in mind. Well, I know I’m a bit pathetic for being this hung up on that.

“Come on, try the next button.”

“Y-Yeah...Wait? Nothing happ—Bebbebebebebe!?”

Pins and needleeeeeeees! My body is twitchiiiiiiiiing!

“I think that button probably was the electric shock.”

“D-D-D-D-Don’t joke with m-m-m-m-mee!”

“We thought that maybe it’ll help with your shoulder stiffness.”

“I-I-I-I feel like I’ll stiffen up more because of rigor mortissssss!!”

While twitching violently, I searched for the button I just pressed, and stopped this torture. That was bad, this costume is more dangerous than I thought. They might even use this as a torture device when it comes to intelligence work inside the country.

“As I mentioned, it has other functions, so be careful.”

“For example?”

“For example... a massage function.”

“Massage?”

Now that’s a great function if you ask me. It’d probably be great for the elderly.

“However, the place it massages are the nipples.”

“Why at such a weak point!?”

“We figured it would make the elderly happy.”

“That kind of stimulus would probably give them heart attacks!”

“Just kidding. We thought that it might make your breasts grow.”

“And how would I benefit from that!?”

“By the way, the power for the left nipple is ‘Weak’, but for the right nipple it’s ‘Strong’.”

“At least make it equal, will you!”

Wouldn’t that make one breast bigger than the other!? Not to mention that Konoe’s eyes suddenly lit up as soon as Konoe explained the costume, screaming “B-Breasts!?” in shock. Does she want bigger breasts that badly? I mean, the very fact that breasts grow if you fondle them is just a superstition.

“...Whatever, I’ll just search for a button later.”

“Hehe, it’s fine. You look great in that costume.”

“Really now.”

“Yes, very much so. Don’t you agree, Subaru?”

“M-Me!?”

Suddenly being a part of the conversation, Konoe faltered. Oh yeah, she’s just been staring at me this entire time, not saying a word.

“...It’s not that cute.”

“That’s a lie. You must love that kind of design, right?”

“T-That’s...!”

“That’s?”

“Urk...” Konoe cast her face downwards, fidgeting to herself.

Seems like Suzutsuki hit the bullseye. Thinking about it, it makes sense. After all, she likes the Silent Sheep, a costume that looks like a sheep killing humans. I wouldn’t be surprised if she liked this kind of

design as well.

“Just be honest with yourself, and say that you love it.”

“...!? Y-Young lady!”

“What’s wrong? Just say it! I love it, I love it, I loooove it! Of course, you only love the costume, right?”

“~~~!”

“Come on, say it.”

“B-B-But...!” Konoe bit her lip, growing silent again.

Maybe she’s embarrassed to have her own taste revealed? I should probably stop them there. Not to mention that I want to ask Suzutsuki something.

“Leaving that aside, aren’t the servants at this place a bit crazy?” I called out to Suzutsuki.

By doing so, she showed a somewhat dejected expression.

“Really now? Didn’t you say they were unique?”

“They are a bit too unique, don’t you think?”

You have a girl crossdressing as a guy, a lolicon chef, and maid sounding like a robot. Even a Dragon Q\*est party wouldn’t be this distinctive. I would have been less surprised if they had some thief as a servant.

“Isn’t it fine? That makes it much more interesting.”

“I know you won’t be bored because of that, but isn’t this pretty bad? That maid talked about LOVE and whatever.”

“That’s right, it seems like she has taken quite a liking to me.”

“...By the way, how old is she?”

“29.”

“So she is older after all.”

“However, she also is a maiden in love.”

“.....”

Is that serious? It's serious, right? I mean, I don't mean to judge other people's preferences, but LOVE, huh. The world is a large place, and there's common sense that I had no way of knowing.

“More importantly, Jirou-kun, you best be careful.”

“Hm? About what?”

“You see, when it comes to me, Ichigo tends to lose sight of her surroundings. It has reached the point where even I am at a loss. That's why, if you were to speak casually to me in front of her—”

**Grrrrrr.** There, I heard the howling of a beast behind me—as well as the sound of an engine. I reflexively turned around, but stopped midway. The blade of a chainsaw was directed at my neck again. Not to mention with it being edging to go at me.

“Why?” It was the same robotic voice from before, but I felt a sharp edge inside of that.

“W-Why what...?”

“Why are you speaking so casually with Kanade-ojousama?”

“I was hoping to achieve better working conditions with the means of peaceful negotiations...”

“NO.”

“B-But, the bare minimum of...”

“You don't need that. Odd Jobs-san, you still don't get it. This is the Suzutsuki Family. We're servants. She's the master. In this residence, she is absolute. If she were to say white, then even a panda is white.”

“.....”



“Okay? No more using casual language with Kanade-oujou-sama. No more acting like you’re close. If you were to do that...”

“...!? It’s going up! The chainsaw is revving up even more!”

The chainsaw sped up. I’m sure that with no blade, it doesn’t hurt that much, but the sound is just terrifying! My ears are hurting from how loud it is!

“Ichigo, stop it there, will you. He is a servant, but also my friend.”

“...Friend, is it?”

“Yes. That’s why, stop.”

“...Understood, Kanade-oujousama.” Ichigo-san clearly was not satisfied with this, but still pulled back the chainsaw.

...A yandere. She’s a yandere maid. Also, why is she still here? Did she hear me scream Suzutsuki’s name and came rushing back? She’s got ridiculously good ears. Also, stop looking at me like a devil, what exactly did I do wrong?

“That being the case, starting today, you are a servant at my residence, so do keep your tone of voice in mind.”

“U-Understood, young lady.”

“Well done. Then, I’ll be heading back to my room. I’ll have Ichigo teach you the ins and outs, so do your best. Let’s go, Subaru.”

“Yes, young lady.” Konoe gave me a faint “You can do it, Jirou,” and walked after Suzutsuki inside the residence.

Um, so I guess I won’t be getting any better treatment after all? Damn Yamitsuki, she really loves bullying me.

“Odd Jobs-san, I’ll teach you.”

Now I was left alone with the yandere maid senior of mine. Yay, what a wonderful day. I get to enjoy what it feels like to work in society. Now I can sympathize with all the salarymen in this world.



“I will have to punish you with this magical remote I received from Kanade-ojousama.”

“M-M-Magicallllll!?”

“What would you like as a chant? Thun\*aga<sup>1</sup>? Or Za\*ple<sup>2</sup>?”

“T-T-T-T-This isn’t some roleplaying game, so will you s-s-s-s-s-s-stop flipping the switch on and off like thattttttt!?”

I had to take a knee because of the constant shock, when Ichigo-san finally turned it off. T-This woman, she clearly went too far there. I didn’t expect her to have a remote of her own. She’s openly glaring at me even. And then, she spoke up with zero of an expression as always.

“Be careful. I’m pressing the next one.”

“...Um, which one?”

“The nipples one.” She declared with not an ounce of joy in her voice.

A beautiful maid just said ‘I’ll press your nipples’. Normally I’d scream ‘Come on, come on! Tune my nipples!’, but this nipple pressing was from this hellish costume I was wearing, so I was pretty much doomed.

“Can’t help it, the path to a first-class entertainer is steep.”

“Wasn’t I supposed to become a servant here?”

“...? Kanade-ojousama said ‘I’ll be hiring a newcomer entertainer’ not too long ago.”

“That was just her stupid nonsense!”

“...Hmmm?”

“Ah, it was just Kanade-ojousama’s jest! I’m not an entertainer!”

“.....”

“Why do you look so disappointed?!”

“I-I wasn’t. More importantly, we’ll start the cleaning, so follow me.” Ichigo-san said, and guided me inside the residence.

This was the third time I walked inside. The first time was back in April, but since I left immediately, I barely got to see anything about the place, so I don’t know the ins and outs. After a few minutes of walking down a hallway with flower pots and paintings, we stopped in front of a single door.

“First up is this room.”

“What kind of room is it?”

“The bath. As it is the bath house of the Suzutsuki Family, it is quite large. That’s why it takes a lot of time. With how thin this costume is, you can wear the long boots in the changing room.”

“Are you not going to help me clean?”

“I have to leave to buy the ingredients for tonight’s dinner. Our chef is currently hospitalized after all.” She explained with a deadpan expression as always. “Farewell.” Those were her final words, as she returned to the hallway.

So she’s filling in while the chef is gone, huh. Still, going ‘Farewell’ is quite the way of phrasing things. Even if she hates my guts, I at least expected a ‘Do your best’ or ‘Fight’, or even ‘Once you’re done...come to my room’. No, that last one definitely won’t happen.

“I guess she really just hates me, huh.”

Maybe seeing me act so casually with Suzutsuki set her off. Though I feel like that’s not the only reason...but, wasting my time thinking about it won’t do me any good. Right now, I’m just a servant. And so that I don’t get punished, I need to work.

“...Do or die, huh.” I let out a sigh, grabbed the cleaning utensils, and entered the changing room.

Upon entering, I was almost blinded because of how white it was.

Also, so big. Even this changing room is double the size of my room at home. So, the long boots Ichigo-san talked about...Ah, found them.

“Good.”

Putting on the boots that I found easily, I grabbed the deck brush from the cleaning utensils. Preparations are complete. Now, onwards to the battlefield—is what I thought, as I opened up the sliding glass door, but...

There stood Suzutsuki Kanade. Not to mention fully naked.

“Kyaaaaaaaaaaa!?”

“Jirou-kun, shouldn’t I be the one to scream in this case?”

Despite this sudden incident, Suzutsuki was as calm as ever. She was probably just in the middle of taking a shower, as she wore not a single piece of clothing. With her hair down, she had only directed her head at me, but her back was in plain sight. As a result of that, her drenched smooth skin was burned into my retinas. I might not be able to see the front, but with her back to me, her butt was...!?

“How long do you plan on looking?”

“...! Sorry!” I screamed, and immediately turned around to tear my gaze away from her.

However, the scenery I was blessed with a second ago was already burned into the back of my eyes. She was taking a shower...and it was none other than Suzutsuki Kanade...

“W-What are you doing here!?” I tried to hide my embarrassment, and blurted out.

“This is the bath, right? What’s weird about me being here?”

“Ichigo-san told me to clean the bath!”

“.....”

Silence. Suzutsuki seemed to be thinking.

“Jirou-kun, I think that you fell into her trap.”

“Trap?”

“Yes. She was planning on making us meet here, while I was taking a bath. She probably wanted me to get angry and fire you, if I had to guess.”

“Wha...”

The heck is up with that? How twisted can she be? It's true that a servant peeking at their master's bathing scene would surely end with being thrown out, but...

“Isn't Ichigo-san to blame as well, then?”

“That's right. I don't doubt that you were told by her to clean the bath. Normally, she would receive the blame for this. She surely is aware of this, and still did this in order to chase you out.”

“No, she's clearly the one at fault here...”

“Think about it. I'm a high school student, an adolescent girl, and now I have to live under the same roof with the boy who happened to see me naked. Normally, I would hate it because it'd be so awkward, right?”

“.....”

So that's what she was aiming for? That reminds me, I happened to see Konoe naked back in April, and she really hated my guts for a while there. I guess this situation is the same. Whatever the reason may be, now that I've seen Suzutsuki naked, it wouldn't be weird to get chased out right now.

...This damn yandere maid. I didn't think she hated me that much. Did me speaking casually to her tick her off that much? Or...is there a different reason?

“But, it's fine.”

“...Eh?”

“I won’t throw you out. After all, you have no other place to stay, right?”

“Suzutsuki...”

“Fufu...Not to mention.” The young lady showed a cheerful smile. “Even if some chicken bastard like you sees me naked like this, I don’t particularly feel anything.”

“.....”

It felt like a delicate part of my chest was cut in two with a chainsaw. That damn Yamitsuki-san, what is she telling me with a straight face...If anything this kind tone only hurts me more, now. I feel like it’d be much better if she just broke my entire heart.

“S-Sorry, I’ll apologize. I feel really bad. But, don’t worry, I, well, didn’t see that much...S-So, I’ll be leaving now...”

I took a 360 and tried to walk away. This bath is like hell itself right now. All my senses were telling me to get out, as quickly as possible. I hurriedly reached for the doorknob, but...

“No.”

Right here I could reach it, Suzutsuki’s voice stopped me, and gyaaaaaah! She’s hugging me from behind! Even though the thin fabric of the costume, I can feel two soft marshmallows pressed against my back, aiming to utterly destroy my senses.

“Y-You!”

“Don’t move, I’ll be done right away.” She whispered into my ear.

Because of this sudden development, as well as my gynophobia activating, my head felt dizzy. Suzutsuki however ignored me, and pushed something into my hands. What is this, a towel?

“Here, preparations are complete.” She sounded satisfied, and the soft sensation at my back disappeared.

However, her next words were even more dangerous.

“Then, could you wash my body?”

“.....What?”

“Didn’t you hear from Subaru? She would sometimes wash my body. However, she’s currently busy with other work, so I’d like to ask you.”

“Y-You...!”

“Ah, I’m sorry, it slipped my mind. I don’t have to ask you. You’re my dog after all. I order you, Jirou-kun.” She spoke like the lady of this house, ordering one of her servants. “Wash my body.”

“...!”

“It’s fine, I have a blindfold just for that. Also, going through this experience of washing a girl’s body will surely help with your gynophobia.”

“Y-You might be right with that, but...”

Damn it, is this woman serious? I didn’t expect her to give me such a ridiculous order. I am a boy, remember? Normally, I wouldn’t even hesitate to say yes. However, I can’t forget about my gynophobia. Just by touching another girl, my nose starts bleeding, and I eventually lose consciousness. And now, a chicken bastard like me is supposed to wash her? Even if I wear a blindfold, the danger level of this mission is at MAX. Save me, James Bond.

“Be quick with it. You want to hurry and fix your gynophobia, right?”

“Urk...I-I get it.”

I had no choice but to agree in this context. Just as Suzutsuki said, if I make it through this mission, it might help with my gynophobia.

“Come over here.” Suzutsuki pulled the blind me along.

It was an odd fashion to see, I bet. I was wearing a costume, and Suzutsuki was completely naked. To compare this situation, it’s close to ‘A Dog of Flanders’. Eh, there was no situation like this in there? I



mean, the dog was brought up to heaven, right? What if Ichigo-san saw us like this? My life would be over, Patrasche.

“Are you serious about this? If Ichigo-san comes back...”

“Rest assured, she should be out shopping.”

“She might have lied about that. Also, if she really set up a trap, wouldn’t she try to witness my crime?”

“Not happening. Ichigo has seen me naked before, but when that happened, she suffered from a nosebleed of your level, and passed out.”

“What a simple reaction...”

“It was pretty fun to watch.”

“So that’s why you’re enjoying my nosebleeds so much!?”

“Fufu, don’t get so angry. Anyway, there’s no way that Ichigo comes back. It’s also true that she went shopping. With only her as a maid and chef, she’s busy. That’s why, just keep calm and wash me, okay?”

“...!?”

It seems like we made it to the location Suzutsuki planned for. Guided by her hand, I sat down on a round stool.

“Then, I’ll have you wash my back.”

“O-Okay.”

“Or, would you rather prefer the front?”

“Do you plan on killing me!?”

The bath would turn into a murder scene in a matter of minutes. Despite there being no murder weapon, the water in the bath will probably turn blood red. What an awful assassination method.

“Fufu. Then, before we start, I’ll have to remove the costume part on your hand. Allowing you to directly feel my body will be even more

effective against gynophobia.” Suzutsuki grabbed my hand yet again, touching the area of my wrist.

Since I couldn’t see anything, I had to sit still, but it seems like she opened up some kind of zipper. Just how many functions does this costume have, seriously.

“Here, all done. Use this towel. It’ll just create bubbles if you use body soap.”

“Y-Yeah...”

I offered her my palm, to which I was given a foaming towel. So I’m using this to wash Suzutsuki’s body while blindfolded, huh. Konoe did something similar to me during Golden Week, but I didn’t expect to be on the giving side this soon.

“Now, go on.” Even so, Suzutsuki’s voice was as calm as always.

Why is she so relaxed? How can you have that much of a poker face? I definitely don’t want to play Black Jack against her. She gives off the image that she could bury me at Tokyo Bay without a single twitch of her eyebrows.

“...Damn it.”

Whatever, no time to waste here. If Suzutsuki is the devil, then this bath is hell. My only way out of this place is to sell my soul...!

“T-Then, here I go.” I carefully pressed the bath towel against her back, and gently moved it up and down.

“Fufu, you’re not half bad at this.”

“W-Why thank you.”

Gaaah my head is going crazy. Calm down. Stop whatever you’re thinking about, and just play a relaxing BGM in your head...Um, as for the song...Wat, why am I hearing ‘Sailor Fuku wo Nugasanaide<sup>3</sup>’? So old. Not to mention that she’s not wearing any clothes anymore.

“Ah, I forgot.”

“W-What?”

“The thing is, that towel is a bit old. If you keep using that too much, it’ll hurt the skin. So, could you put some foam on your palm, and wash me directly?”

Eeeeeek!? What is this devil thinking...She must have been a demon lord in her previous life. Or, some demon that got exorcised by a priest back in the middle ages. Anybody, please save me.

“Hurry up, this is an order.”

“O-Okay...”

Going along with Suzutsuki’s order, I put away the towel, and pressed my palms on her back.

“...!?”

Immediately after, I felt a warm sensation on the tip of my nose. My nose is bleeding. It seems like it didn’t take long for my gynophobia to activate.

“Are you okay? You’re not allowed to pass out before you finish washing your master’s back.”

“Urk...Alright...”

“Fufu, what a good boy you are.”

“Stop treating me like a dog...!”

I tried to fight back, but my consciousness was getting close to cutting out. The current BGM in my head suddenly changed to Pink Lady’s ‘S.O.S.’ for some reason. Again, what’s with these old songs?

“Urk...” I grit my teeth to deal with my lightheadedness, and continued to wash Suzutsuki’s back.

Waah, so smooth, and warm. A girl’s skin washed with foam is like heaven.

“Thank you for being so careful.”

“I-Is this enough already?”

“No, Subaru would always take her time. Or, is it because I was always teasing her that our baths take so long?”

“.....”

Because I couldn't help imagining the sight of two classmates (girls) taking a bath together the BGM in my head once again changed from 'S.O.S.' to 'Kinjirareta Asobi<sup>4</sup>'. An instrumental song this late into the game?



“Urk...”

...I-I can't anymore. Together with this melody playing in my head, my consciousness started to drift away.

“Thank you, that's enough.”

Finally, I received permission from my master. I pulled my hand

away from Suzutsuki, and washed away the foam and soap. I feel like I was busy washing a car for the past hour, I'm so exhausted...

"Any impressions?"

"I'm tired. If anything, I wouldn't mind a bonus."

I feel the contents of this task were plenty of a bonus, but that is that. I didn't get to enjoy much of it because of my gynophobia. Thankfully, that's over now. I need to get back to cleaning.

"Fine by me, I'll give you a reward."

I cursed my carelessness for a split second.

"No need to hold back. A good owner gives their dog a reward if they do well. It's the same."

Again, I'm not a dog!—is what I wanted to retort, but I was too terrified to say anything. Why does she sound like she came up with something good? I still can't see anything, but there's no doubt she's smiling right now. She's showing her true colors as a wolf.

"Then, let me think..." I heard a faint teasing snicker. "I'll give you a kiss."

"What?"

My thoughts stopped for a moment. Even the BGM stopped playing. However, Suzutsuki ignored me and my lack of reaction, and continued explaining.

"I said I'll give you a kiss."

"But, a kiss is...!"

"What's the problem? We did it before, right?"

Because of these words, I was reminded of the incident during Golden Week. Ahhhh, that did happen, yeah. She stole my second kiss. By the way, Konoe apparently was my first one, but since she was using artificial respiration, I have no memories of that.

“Jirou-kun...” She called out my name with a sickly sweet tone.

Because I was still blindfolded, I couldn't see what was going on, but she suddenly took my hand, and brought her face closer. I could tell because her faint breath started hitting me.

“...Mmmn.”

Then, her lips gently touched my skin...

“...Hm? Hold on.”

What is this? No doubt, it was a kiss from Suzutsuki. However, she didn't kiss the place I expected her to. That's right, she pressed her lips on the back of my hand.

“Here, this is your reward. Did you expect me to give you a kiss on the mouth by any chance?”

“.....”

...I'll kill her. One day, I'll make sure she's gone. Is playing with me that fun? Since she turned into Yamitsuki-san, her pranks have only escalated even further.

“What's wrong? Why are you blushing like that?”

“S-Shut up! Like hell I'd be embarrassed just because of this! At least make it a kiss on the cheek!”

“...Eh? No, I can't kiss such an embarrassing place.”

“Your values of purity are definitely messed up, you hear me!”

Even though she broadly kissed me before, why is she acting like that now?

“Anyway, I got my reward, so I'm leaving.”

I'm sure she's feeling satisfied with this, so I'll get back to my work. With these thoughts, I tried to stand up, but...

“My, what are you talking about? My reward for you still isn't fully

over.”

“Eh?”

As I froze up in doubt, Suzutsuki pulled her hand towards me. And then—

“S-Suzutsuki!?” I raised a scream in terror.

After all, Suzutsuki had gulped down my index finger with her lips. And then, she used her soft and wet tongue to gently caress it, like a snake warming up its prey.

“Nn...Mmn...” She gave off faint, intoxicated breathing.

Even the sound of her saliva building up reached my ears. It’s a kiss. It might be just on my finger, but it was a passionate kiss nonetheless.

“S-Suzutsuki, stop...”

“Nnn...”

“!?”

Almost as if she tried to deny my resistance, Suzutsuki gently bit my finger. W-What is this. What is she doing to me while I’m wearing a blindfold? Because I couldn’t see anything, my senses were much more sensitive. Gyaaaah, save me, Zatoichi<sup>5</sup>, being blind is terrifying.





“S-Stop it...”

Rather than resisting, I was pretty much just begging her. I can feel my gynophobia activating again. However, Suzutsuki did not stop.

“Mmmnnn...No...can do...” The watery sounds grew even stronger.

I felt my finger getting soggy, as Suzutsuki’s hot tongue ran across it.

“Why...? At this rate, I’ll pass out for good...!”

“No...I won’t stop...Because I’m Yamitsuki-san...and I need you to hate me.”

Almost as if these words ended up as a trigger, my consciousness faded into the darkness.

“...Everything is your fault.” Amidst the darkness, I heard a faint mutter. “Not to mention...even this made my heart race...”

I couldn’t even tell if I was still awake or dreaming. Finally, my symptoms got the better of me, and even the voice stopped.

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1 Thundaga, a spell from Final Fantasy

2 Zapple, a spell from Dragon Quest

3 A song from Onyanko Club. The lyrics are...very yikes.

4 A song from 東京事変 (Tokyo Jihen) I think. There’s multiple ones

5 From The Blind Samurai movie



# Chapter 3: Attack! Butler-kun is next to me

Let me start from the conclusion. Despite being utterly exhausted, I still somehow managed to finish all my cleaning duties. After that incident in the bath, I quickly regained my consciousness, and Suzutsuki (who was wearing clothes already, sadly) told me to continue my work. The residence itself was terrifyingly big, but since it was constantly kept at a clean state, it really wasn't that much work after all.

Though, I finished my work at roughly 9pm in the evening. All other servants except me had already concluded their dinner, so it meant dinner for one, all alone. However, I was hungry as all hell from work, so I headed over to the kitchen, but...

“Good work.”

Upon entering the kitchen, I was greeted by an expressionless Ichigo-san. That's right, this yandere maid is the big problem. I'm worried if she even gives me something to eat.

“What about the work uniform you received from Kanade-ojousama? Did you take it off?”

“Sure did. I was just sweating profusely beneath that.”

That was a blank lie. I wasn't sweating that much at all, but I took it off on the way here, and put it on my tent. As long as Ichigo-san has access to that cursed remote, wearing that costume runs the risk of me being treated like a damn toy. Though, it took a lot of time and suffering to find the right button to open the zipper.

“That reminds me, how did cleaning the bath go?”

“Well, right after you left, the young lady came out of the changing room, saying ‘I'll be using the bath for a while, so you don't need to clean it right now’, and stopped me.”

“I see.” The eyepatch maid looked disappointed from the bottom of her heart.

Naturally, that just now was another lie. If I told her about what really happened in the bath, it’ll be chainsaw time. Not to mention that Suzutsuki asked me to keep that a secret as well.

“Well, whatever. Are you hungry?”

“...Quite.”

“YES. I will prepare your dinner.” She said, and moved towards the fridge, with the door opening.

What she took out was...

“I got this just for you.”

Beef jerky. However, the dog food version.

“.....”

Calm down, I expected as much. However, how can I get some proper dinner?

“Do you really call yourself the chef’s replacement?”

For starters, I tried to use her own pride against her, and stirred her up. Judging from what I heard thanks to Suzutsuki’s intel, she’s not half bad when it comes to cooking, so if I hurt her chef’s soul...

“Provocation is futile. I received orders to do this.”

“Orders? From the young lady?”

“NO. He’s my senior, and superior.”

“...The old man.”

“YES. Nagare-san told me a lot about you. Before he left, he told me the following. ‘If some dumb and shitty brat with glasses comes to our residence, I don’t mind if you treat him like a dog’, see.”

That damn helicopter parent. I doubt he predicted that my home would burn down, but he sure is careful even when it comes to his own place. Also, who are you calling dumb?

“However, I didn’t think you would become a temporary servant here.” Ichigo-san gave me a sharp glance.

Yeah, I really feel like she hates me. That being said, if I don’t fight back, my dinner will be dog food. I don’t want to become an actual dog, so I need to say something.

“Rest assured.” To my surprise, Ichigo-san showed me her palm. “I’ll properly treat you to something today. You’re Kanade-ojousama’s friend after all, right?”

“...Ichigo-san.”

“Don’t get the wrong idea. I’m not being considerate or anything, I’ll just make you some dinner for Kanade-ojousama’s sake.” Ichigo-san walked towards the fridge again.

...What, she’s a normal person after all? I guess even a murder weapon-holding yandere maid is a good person deep down. There are no demons in this world after all. Warmth exists in every corner...

“Let me tell you one thing.” Ichigo-san turned towards me. “There’s a certain trick to eating what I’m about to serve you.”

“Trick?”

“YES. Two minutes in the microwave. As long as you can keep that in mind, it’ll be delicious.”

She threw something at me. I panicked a bit and caught it, and it turned out to be the one household food that was mostly used by boys living alone, done in a matter of minutes and enjoyed for aeons...instant ramen.

“.....”

Even I got pissed off now.

“Call the chef!” I screamed like a Karen.

“I am the chef now.” Ichigo-san puffed out her chest.

I seriously thought of changing my work place.

♀ × ♂

That being said, I can’t just head off to Hello Work right now. That’s why I could only protest with Ichigo-san, but when I asked for improvement at my work treatment, Ichigo-san complained with ‘Want more? Greedy’, and threw a sugar cube at me. I feel like this is a beautiful example of power harassment. Of course, the ramen isn’t at fault. On the contrary, we’re best friends, but it’s just not enough.

After I reluctantly ate nothing but the instant ramen, I tried to deal with my still empty stomach, and made my way back to the tent. It was currently half past 9 in the evening. Well, I can only sleep, really. I had a sleeping bag in the tent, so I should be safe from the cold at least. What’s most problematic is my empty stomach. I’m terrified of what I’ll be served tomorrow morning, but worrying about it won’t do me any good. Maybe the starry sky will magically fill my stomach?

With these thoughts, I opened up the tent, but—Konoe Subaru was inside. Not to mention that she was wearing the costume I previously had taken off.

“.....”

Are you serious, Subaru-sama? Do you want...bigger breasts that badly?

“Jirou!? Y-You’re wrong, there’s a reason for this!”

She caught on to my arrival, and started panicking. Oh crap, that costume is so adorable. She looked like a small puppy resting inside the tent. I feel like this might create some new kind of movement?

“Calm down. Why are you even wearing this?”

“W-When I saw you wear it...I was jealous.” She looked at me like a

puppy, pleading to its owner.

Was she that desperate to wear it? Well, considering her interests and taste, I'm not surprised.

"Not to mention...you were wearing this the entire time, Jirou."

"Eh?"

"No, it's nothing! Don't mind me! Just..."

"Just?"

"I tried it on, but now I can't take it off..."

"Did you not listen to Suzutsuki's explanation just now? Once you pull up the zipper, you can't take it off yourself."

"D-Don't make fun of me! I was listening properly! Also, the young lady previously told me where the right button is, but..." Konoe suddenly grew silent.

If I had to guess, she probably forgot which button did what. She really is careless at times. With so many different functions, she probably was scared to activate something weird.

"What should I do, Jirou, do I have to stay like this forever? What if I press the wrong button, and it'll start massaging my ni...breasts..." Konoe's body quivered like a puppy freezing in the cold.

Yeah, a nipple massage definitely is terrifying. However, a part of me also wants to see Subaru-sama on the receiving end like that...

"Well, can't do that though."

"Can't do what?"

"Nothing. Just me talking to myself. Anyway, I know which button you have to press, so I'll take it off for you."

"T-Take it off!?"

"Why are you panicking like this?"



“B-Because...!” Konoe blushed furiously, and suddenly grew silent.

.....Don't tell me, did she take off her clothes before this? I directed my gaze towards the corner of the tent, only to find a beautifully folded butler's uniform. Isn't she thorough...even though she could have just worn the costume above that.

“Alright, I'll tell you which button it is, so go change later. Also, did you only come here to wear the costume?”

“Hmpf, you're wrong about that. I figured that the night would be cold, so I brought you some refreshment.”

“Refreshment!?”

My empty stomach was screaming ‘Hallelujah!’ in joy. Great timing. Konoe might not be the best cook, but I can at least expect some calories!

“Here, it's black tea. I made sure to keep it warm inside this canteen.” Konoe took out the mentioned canteen, as well as two cups.

Urk...So it's not food. Well, when you think of a butler, you tend to imagine tea...However, black tea isn't going to fill my empty stomach. Ahh, I can't be thinking about my empty stomach...

“...Jirou, should I not have done this?” Konoe gave me an anxious gaze, with dampened eyes.

Waaah, don't look at me like that. Of course, she's not to blame. She did this solely out of pure and benevolent intentions. What man would I be if I rejected this kindness?

“Of course not. I'm looking forward to having a taste of your tea.”

“R-Really? I'm actually pretty confident when it comes to my cooking.”

Konoe must have been relieved at my smile, as her expression lit up like a puppy's allowed to go for a walk, as she poured some tea into a cup. Confident, huh...Thinking of Konoe's cooking skill, I'm a bit scared to touch that...

“Here you go, Jirou.”

However, I also can't betray this smile. Slightly scared, I put my mouth to the cup, and took a sip.

“...Hm?”

Huh? This is actually not half bad...No, it's pretty good, honestly. I don't really drink black tea that often so I can't really tell, but this warmth filling my body was kind yet delicious. I didn't expect Konoe to have this kind of skill.

“Hehe, how is it?”

“Yeah, it's delicious.”

“Right? I'm amazing after all.”

“It's been quite some time since you showed me that you really are a butler.”

“What's that supposed to mean!?” Dear costume butler-kun pouted.

“Sorry, sorry. But, this tea really is great.”

“Y-You think so? I'm glad you like it, I guess it's just as the young lady said.”

“Was this Suzutsuki's plan?”

“Yeah, she said ‘Go and do a nightly raid on Jirou-kun’, you know.”

**Pfffffft!** I spit out the rest of the tea in my mouth.

“What's wrong? A nightly raid is what you call when you give someone else provisions for the night, right? The young lady taught me.”

That damn Devil Suzutsuki, she went and started teasing the pure-hearted Konoe. I just pray that Konoe doesn't go to Kureha tomorrow, saying that ‘Last night, I raided Jirou-kun’. It'll cause a murder scene at this very Suzutsuki Residence, with me as the victim. And right as

I was thinking that...

—Groooooooooowl.

Sadly, even the black tea didn't fill my stomach enough. My stomach was screaming SOS. Mayday, mayday, we're running low on calories.

"Huh? Jirou, are you hungry?"

"W-Well, a bit."

"Why? Didn't you eat dinner after you finished your work?" There, Konoe's eyes opened wide, and her facial color changed to dark blue. "It must have been Ichigo's doing, right? Sorry, Jirou, I didn't expect this."

"Don't worry about it, you're not at fault."

"By the way, what was your menu?"

"Uhhh...sugar cubes and instant ramen."

"S-So cruel...! If that happened to me, I'd cause a labour strike...!"

If anything, I feel like you'd burn down this place. A hungry butler sounds like end of the world material.

"Apologies, Jirou. I should have brought you something else to eat when I entered the kitchen with the young lady."

"...Why did you enter together with her?"

"T-That's...because..."

"...Are you still banned from the kitchen?"

I feel like she mentioned something like that when we made curry together during last summer break. To think that was still a thing almost a month later.

"W-What am I supposed to do!? Also, it should be fine even if I walked in there myself...Ah, I know, I'll bring something to eat for you."

“Right now!? Maybe you shouldn’t, you’ll only get an earful if someone sees you.”

“Urk...” Konoe grit her teeth. “If only I could enter the kitchen alone...Maybe there’s something else to eat...” The butler twisted her head.

Leaving the residence to buy something this late is also questionable. There didn’t seem to be any convenience stores nearby, so I can only deal with my empty stomach.

“...Ah.”

There, Konoe seemed to have come up with something.

“What’s up? Got anything good?”

“W-Well...yeah...”

For some reason, she sounded awfully bashful. And I soon found out why.

“...Jirou.” She seemingly made up her mind, and looked at me. “Won’t you...come to my room?”

♀ × ♂

“T-Thanks for the food.”

I finished the last bite of the cup ramen (Super \*up), and put down the chopsticks with tense hands.

“I-It was delicious, thanks.”

“Y-Yeah, glad to hear that...”

Apparently, Konoe seemed just as tense as me, nodding while still wearing the costume. That’s right, we currently were in Konoe Subaru’s private room. It was my first time seeing it from the inside.

“Still, I didn’t think you’d be hiding cup ramen in your room.”

“Hmpf, don’t blame me. I can’t really eat that much in this place.

They talk about it being bad nutrition.”

“That’s why you even have a pot ready?”

“W-What about it!? I can’t eat it cold!”

I mean, you’re not wrong. But even so, hiding cup ramen beneath your bed, that sure surprised me. I mean, I did something similar back in May, but to think she took this much liking to cup ramen.

“Also, you have a lot of plush toys, huh.”

“Yeah, they’re cute, right?”

“Well, um, I guess...” I didn’t know what to say.

You can’t blame me for that, because when I looked at all the plush toys inside the room...it was all Silent Sheep. All plush toys that looked like a certain doctor from a certain movie. Its aggressive design was one thing, and yet it sold like hot potatoes for some reason.

“When I asked Nakuru-chan, she gave me lots. Her father is the company president of the manufacturer, remember?”

That damn glasses junkie. She probably planned to get on Konoe’s good side, by offering her bait in the form of these Silent Sheep plush toys. You shouldn’t feed the butler, remember? Then again, taking away the plush toys, it was your average room.

“.....!”

Not good, becoming aware that this was a girl’s room, I’ve gotten nervous again. It’s totally obvious, but I never had any chance to enter such holy ground. If I even accidentally barged into my little sister’s room, she’d use this as a reason to give me a pro wrestling lesson, and although I did go to Masamune’s room, I was nervous because of the whole ghost thing. That’s why I can’t help but tense up right now. After all, this undoubtedly is Konoe Subaru’s home.

“J-Jirou, why don’t we play something since you’re here already?” Konoe asked with an uncertain tone.

Yeah, it's still a bit early to head to bed. Not to mention that Konoe and I are good friends, so playing something when it's just the two of us wouldn't hurt.

"Alright. You have any idea?"

"I do have a W\*i with me."

"A W\*i!?"

Why does a butler have such a modern game console here!? No, she's a high school student, it's not weird at all.

"What games do you have?"

"Momotetsu<sup>1</sup>."

"Oh, I didn't expect you to like such a commoner game. What else?"

"No, just Momotetsu."

"...W-Well, fine. I guess you just like it that much? I often play it with Kureha."

However, she would often break the controller, or pull some dangerous wrestling technique on me, so I try to avoid playing it. It evokes a strong trauma within me every time. However, Momotetsu is a popular game with a large and old fanbase, so to spend a bit of time, it should be just fine...

"...No can do. This isn't enough of a contest."

"What? Do you not know the controls or something?"

Konoe can be quite clumsy after all. Buying it is one thing, but maybe the controls are just beyond her.

"No, the difference in technique between the two of us is too big."

"Huh?"

"My playtime of Momotetsu is about 300 hours."

“300!?”

“I got hooked on it when I was playing it alone.”

“You were playing Momotetsu solo!?”

“D-Don’t make fun of me! Momotetsu is a game you can enjoy on your own!”

“But, 300 hours is just...”

“...W-Well I’m sorry, okay? I never got a chance to bring a friend over from school, and inviting the young lady while being her butler is a bit...” Konoe started sulking like a puppy that had its food stolen from it.

Oh yeah, she didn’t have any friends until she met me. Still, not even playing with her own master, she sure is diligent about her work. But then, why didn’t she ask her old man? They’re family, right.

“By the way, I thought of inviting Dad, but decided against it.”

“Why?”

“I don’t want him to enter my room.”

“.....”

It was a prime example of a child growing up independently from their parents. I know how exhausting the old man can be, and although she might be crossdressing as a man, Konoe is still a girl, and at a very delicate age.

“When he walked into my room, he was so moved he started crying.”

“Why!?”

“He’s gotten quick to bawling compared to before, and even started crying when watching ‘P\*nyo on the Cliff’.”

“Was that movie such a tearjerker!?”

“Apparently he sympathized with P\*nyo’s father a lot.”

“.....”

“Let him be, Jirou. He’s at a delicate age.” Konoe showed a distant gaze.

That old fart would cry simply by walking inside his daughter’s room? What happens if she goes and gets married? The marriage ceremony will turn to his funeral. Or rather, after calling the groom, he’ll probably end himself, and still go up to heaven.

“That being the case, Momotetsu is no good...Let’s play a different game.”

“A different game?”

“It’s the one you and the young lady did when we went to the beach.”

“Hmm...”

Is she talking about the game where we write things on each other’s backs? I don’t mind, but...

“Why that?”

“W-Why’s it matter! I always wanted to play this!”

“R-Really? Then, let’s do it.”

I couldn’t go against Konoe’s pushy attitude. I didn’t expect her to be this into this game, really. Maybe it’ll help with my gynophobia as well.

“...Alright, I’ll go along with the young lady’s manual...”

“What?”

“No, it’s nothing. Let’s hurry up and start.”

Konoe immediately moved around me, turning towards my back. Eh? Wouldn’t you play rock paper scissors first? However, Konoe already put her finger on my back. Is it just my imagination, or are her



fingers quivering?

“T-Then, I’m starting...” She said, and her fingers started moving.

Li.

“Li?”

Li...Lie? What does that have to do with anything?

“D-Don’t get the wrong idea! I’m not done yet!”

“Really?”

“Yeah...this is what’s important.”

“.....”

I felt an odd pressure directed at my back. Hey now, why are you so desperate? Just have fun...with the game. It’s like I’m being interrogated instead.

“H-Here I go...” She moved her finger again.

ke.

“...ke?”

It was probably a continuation of the previous word, but...

“Urk...!” I heard a groan coming from Konoe, and her fingers moved one more time.

lihood.

“...Likelihood<sup>2</sup>?”

“C-Correct...” Konoe’s voice was filled with frustration.

If anything, it sounded like she was cursing to herself. Why is she such a sore loser? It’s like she lost her victory at a hair’s width.

“...Jirou, let’s stop with this game.”

“Eh? We barely started, right?”

“Sorry, the hurdle is too big for me.”

“.....”

I have no idea what she’s talking about. Was she that frustrated that I guess what she was writing? I mean, that’s her fault for using such a simple word. Not to mention that this ended so quickly, my gynophobia wasn’t even flaring up.

“What should we do? Play cards?”

“No can do, I don’t have any here. Also, let’s stop with the games.”

“Eh?”

“The games—are over.”

“Why’re you trying to sound cool now?”

“S-Shut up! I was trying to set the mood!” Konoe pouted in displeasure, and stood up like she made up her mind about something. “I’ll help you fix it.”

“Fix...you mean my gynophobia?”

“You wouldn’t want to stay that way forever, right? You said that you couldn’t enter a relationship with a girl after all...”

“Well, I did say that...”

Then again, what will you do? Without Suzutsuki around, there’s no effective program to fix my gynophobia, right?

“No need to worry. I already have a plan in mind.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. However...in order to execute that plan, I need a bit of courage.” Konoe sounded awfully serious all of a sudden.

As I was left confused on what she was even doing, she took out a

remote from her pocket. It was the remote belonging to the costume. Without hesitation, she pressed a single button there, namely the one I told her about a few minutes ago, which unlocked the zipper to take off the costume, and...

“...! Konoe!?”

With no resistance whatsoever, the costume slid down Konoe’s body.

“Y-Y-Y-You! What are you doing!?”

“Don’t panic like that, this is all for the sake of your treatment.”

“That’s clearly too stimulating if you ask me!”

You don’t need to use your own body like that...After the costume fell to the ground, I could see her slender, almost thin legs, together with her squishy thighs, and snow white underwear. Her feminine body was right in my view—

“...Hm?”

Rather than underwear, this looks more like a swimsuit.

“It’s fine, this is just a swimsuit. I figured that maybe this could help cure your gynophobia, so I put it on today. It’s the same one as I wore at the beach, remember?”

“Yeah, but...why did you not want to take it off in the tent, then?”

“I told you, this method needs courage. And, I hadn’t mentally prepared myself back then...” Konoe spoke with a bashful tone.

Damn it, what are these feelings? I’m having flashbacks from the same thing happening back at Masamune’s place. Why is it always a bikini, are you trying to kill me...

“More importantly...Jirou.” Suddenly, Konoe gave me a sharp glare. “During last summer break, you went to Usami’s house, right?”

“I”

“There, she treated you to some meat and potato stew, correct?”

“!?”

“I ignored it back at the time, but she actually hugged you while only wearing a swimsuit, yeah?”

“How do you know about that?!”

“A while ago, I questioned Usami about that, so she told me. To think she would go that far, even if it’s for your gynophobia.”

“.....”

T-The hell? It’s true that Masamune pulled some dubious treatment on me right before the whole elopement trip, but why is this coming up now? This friendly time suddenly turned into an interrogation. Guess I can only develop a time machine and travel back to the past, back to when life was still fun.

“But...it’s fine.”

“Eh?”

“I’m not particularly angry about the fact that you received treatment from Usami. Rather, that gave me a hint on how I can help you.”

“Hint?”

“That’s right. You should get what I’m playing at, looking at my swimsuit, right?” Konoe proudly put one hand on her hip.

During last summer break, she wore thin fabric around her waist with this white swimsuit, but now that was taken off. Probably because of that, it felt like an even more stimulating design. Seeing Subaru-sama who was usually wearing a male uniform in such feminine attire, the gap that was born from it was too adorable.

“D-Don’t tell me, Konoe-san...” My voice quivered, as a trauma came rushing back to my head.

During summer break, when I was receiving treatment from

Masamune, she pressed her body onto me, while only wearing a swimsuit. Naturally, she did not care if my nose started bleeding. If Konoe were to do the same now...

“T-That’s right, if we hug each other while I’m wearing only a swimsuit, it should help improve your gynophobia.”

“.....!”

I should have seen that one coming. However, that method is way too embarrassing. Not to mention that seemed to be the same for Konoe, as her face was red as an apple. That being said, this was Konoe’s room, a secluded location. It was just us two in here, so if we went through with this, things would surely end up dangerous...

“W-Why are you hesitating? Don’t you want to fix your gynophobia?”

“Urk...!”

I sure as hell do. I want to get rid of this gynophobia, and touch girls. I want to have a normal student life, one that is completely different from right now. Remember, Konoe is going this far for my sake. It wouldn’t be fair if I was the one wussing out.

“A-Alright.” I made up my mind, and looked directly at Konoe.

In response, the girl went ‘A-Alright, so then...’ and continued.

“...Please hug me.” She spoke with a voice about to disappear.

“...What?”

“L-Like I said, I’m telling you to hug me!”

“W-Why?”

“Isn’t that obvious!? Hugging you with my initiation...i-is way too embarrassing!”



She started blushing even more aggressively. H-H-H-Hug her!? That's a bit...I did hug her before at the graveyard during summer break, but that happened in the heat of the moment, and right now, Konoe is wearing a bikini...Not to mention that Masamune was the assertive one last time...

“Or, do you not want to hug me? Are you saying that some crossdressing butler like me wouldn't be any help in curing your

gynophobia?”

Urk...

“...Jirou.” Konoe’s eyes dampened up.

She looked up at me, like she was expecting something...Alright, fight’s on. We’re here now, there’s no turning back.

“Alright, let’s do it. I’m going on ahead, okay?”

“.....Yeah.” Konoe put her trust in me, and closed her eyes.

Quietly, I wrapped my arms around the girl’s slender body—

“...!?”

A moment later, I felt shivers all over my body. My gynophobia was activating. Just because I was embracing a girl, my symptoms immediately showed.

“Mm...” Konoe let out a faint sigh inside my arms.

Gyaaah, her breath! It’s too close. I’d rather be used as a punching back by Kureha again.

“...Jirouuu.” There, the butler in my arms looked up at me. “Could you, um...hug me a bit more tightly?”

“Wha...”

“I know it might be hard for you, but this is to cure your gynophobia.”

“B-But...”

“I’m fine...I don’t...hate this or anything.”

“.....!”

“...Jirouuu.” She called out to me with an alto voice about to vanish.

Unable to disobey, I gave a weak ‘U-Understood’, and—**Squeeze.** I

put a bit more strength into the arms that embraced Konoe, who started blushing even more aggressively.

“Fuwaaaaah...” I heard a faint breath.

Konoe seemingly buried her face in my chest as if she was trying to bear with something.

“J-Jirou...you’re so warm.”

“W-Well, I am a human after all.” My eyes were spinning, and I could only give a vague response.

The symptoms of my gynophobia were assaulting every part of my body. My consciousness was reaching critical levels. It’s honestly a miracle that I didn’t suffer from a nosebleed yet. This might be the longest I ever fought against the symptoms. Normally, I’d be drenched in blood by now...A-Alright. Since I reached a new record, I guess this is a good time to—

“...Jirouuu.”

However, right as I wanted to move my arms away, Konoe raised her head. Even now, I could get lost in those translucent eyes of hers. Her cheeks were red, and she had lost her cold and indifferent butler expression, now looking at me like a girl—

“Jirou...I...” Her soft-looking lips started forming words.

We were part of our own world, our breaths touching. I knew that she was trying to tell me something important, but right then...

“Konoe-senpai, are you awake?”

Someone suddenly knocked on the door. It was an almost childish voice—Kureha.

“...! Jirou, get away!” Konoe panicked, and moved away from me.

Yeah, that makes sense. Right now, she’s not in her butler attire, she looks like a normal girl. If Kureha sees her like this, she’ll be forced to quit as a butler. Also, why is Kureha even here this late?



“Jirou, you hide in that closet over there!!”

It's not like we were doing anything.....Actually, this looks pretty bad from an outsider's perspective, huh. That's probably why Konoe is panicking now, as she was giving me orders.

“Y-Yeah.”

I immediately nodded along, and entered the closet in the corner of the room. Before, Kureha was dubious if there wasn't any kind of BL relationship going on between Konoe and me. If she were to find me here, those surely wouldn't just stay as doubts. The inside of the closet was much more narrow than I expected. It seemed to contain Konoe's casual clothes, because I saw countless girlish clothes put up on the hangers, but before I could see anything, Konoe closed the door in front of me.

“Konoe-senpai?” Kureha's tone of choice changed into curiosity.

This is bad. Because I was locked into the darkness like this, I failed to fully grasp the situation. If the door to the room isn't locked, it wouldn't be weird for Kureha to just waltz inside...

“...Damn it.”

Konoe! Hurry up and change! I heard rustling outside the door, when suddenly...

“Kya!?”

Together with an adorable shriek, I heard something collapsing across the door...I have a bad feeling about this. Maybe Konoe rushed too much when trying to change, and tripped...?

“Konoe-senpai, are you okay!?”

That shriek must have reached Kureha, as she moved to open the door. What awful timing, really. We're done for. With this, Konoe's life as a butler is over....

“Jirou! Let me in as well!”

The door to the closet shot open, with Konoe barging inside. Because the sudden influx of light was too bright, I couldn't perfectly see her appearance. Following that, the closet door closed again. Immediately after, the door to the room opened, and I heard Kureha's footsteps.

"Hmmm? Is Konoe-senpai not here after all? Weird, I feel like I heard a voice." My little sister sounded confused.

Fuhaha, you foolish girl. To think you can't even see through such a simple trick...I was acting like some comic book villain, but the actual situation wasn't as comfortable.

"K-K-Konoe! Don't cling to me like this!" I whispered in a quiet voice so that Kureha wouldn't hear us.

As a matter of fact, Konoe was pretty much glued to me. Gaaah, my gynophobia is activating again...!

"I-I can't help it! This closet is far too narrow!"

Well yeah, it wasn't made for people to be in here. I doubt the person who built this closet thought we'd use it like this. It's far too narrow, I can't even move properly.

"More importantly, Jirou."

"What's more important now?"

"Well...can you see me right now?"

"Not at all. It's pitch black."

"I-I see...Thank god. I went and hid the costume beneath the bed, so I think we should be fine."

For some reason, Konoe sounded oddly relieved at that. However, the situation was just as dangerous as before. If this was a horror movie, it'd take a few more minutes before the serial killer spots us. Not to mention that Kureha is far more dangerous than some run-of-the-mill killer.

“So this is Konoe-senpai’s room, huh...What a wonderful place...”

Not knowing of our feelings, Kureha just looked around the room. Oh yeah, she’s also a fan of the Silent Sheep. If not, then she wouldn’t just go around calling this room ‘wonderful’ and whatever. Despite hating it at first, now she’s really into it, huh.

“Maybe I should just wait until he comes back?”

Urk...Stop that, my little sister. Konoe won’t be coming home no matter how long you wait. Also, you’re a trespasser here, you really should leave, or Konoe might start to hate you.

“Ah, I know...” Kureha seemingly came up with something, as she moved through Konoe’s room, footsteps approaching us.

D-Don’t tell me, did she catch on to us? I saw no other option, and tried to carefully open the door to confirm the situation, but...

“J-Jirou! You can’t open it!”

“It’s fine, we won’t get caught.”

“T-That’s not what I’m worried about. The light will...”

For some reason, Konoe fumbled over her own words, growing silent. What’s going on with her? Why is she so against it? Well, there are bigger problems now. I carefully opened the closet door, observing the enemy...

“Ehehehe, Konoe-senpai~”

The scenery that opened up in front of me left me speechless. Kureha, in her maid attire, jumped onto Konoe’s bed, rolling around as she tightly embraced the pillow, even burying her face inside of it. She looked like a cat, playing with its favorite toy, or enjoying the presence of its owner.

“.....”

Stop it, my sister. I know that you like Subaru-sama, but you shouldn’t go this far. I didn’t want to see you looking like a pervert.



“Kureha-chan, what are you doing in Subaru’s room?”

There, as I was worrying if I raised my little sister the wrong way, another voice could be heard. This mature tone...Suzutsuki!

“Nya!? Onee-sama! Why are you in Konoe-senpai’s room!?”

“I was walking down the hallway, when I saw that the door was

open.”

“Ahhh! I forgot to close it! No, you’re wrong, Onee-sama! I wasn’t enjoying Konoe-senpai’s scent or anything!?”

“Then what are you doing here?”

“That’s...I wanted Subaru-sama to look at me in my maid clothes.”

“So you tried to appeal to Subaru, I see. Aren’t you a cute one, Kureha-chan.”

“~~~!” Kureha grew flustered like a kitty.

I see, so she went all the way out here just for that. That’s a maiden in love for you, she really knows how to act. Worse of all, these maid clothes actually looked good on her.

“So, where exactly is Subaru?”

“Ah...when I came in, he was already gone...Ah, I didn’t enter without permission, I just heard a weird noise in the room before that!”

“Hmmm...” Suzutsuki observed the inside of the room.

Then, for a single moment, her glance met with mine, through the gap of the closet door. That’s Devil Suzutsuki for you, she immediately figured out everything. Though I bet she doesn’t know why exactly we’re hiding. However, this is a chance. If only she can convince Kureha to leave the room.

“Kureha-chan, since we’re here already, why don’t we check Subaru’s room a bit?”

However, Suzutsuki smiled like the devil, betraying my hope.

“Check out...his room?”

“That’s right. At least until he comes back.”

“B-But, we really shouldn’t...”

“It’s fine, you’re together with me, his master, so he won’t blame you. Also, don’t you want to know more...about Subaru?”

“.....Yes.”

Kureha nodded.

Waaaaah, what is this woman thinking! This time, I’ll call Mephistopheles for sure!

“Now then, let’s start over here.”

Confirming the situation through the gap, I saw Suzutsuki heading over to a bookshelf. She probably won’t guide Kureha to this closet, but I can tell she’s up to no good.

“Ah, that’s...!” Konoe let out a faint shriek of terror.

Please, don’t let out your voice. If they find us now, it’s over.

“What is that?”

“A photo album, with pictures from when Subaru was still very young.”

“A young Konoe-senpai!? Can I take a look?”

“Of course, these are pictures that I **can show to you**, after all.”

She clearly put a different meaning into her words. That album probably has no pictures that show Konoe being a girl. Judging from what Suzutsuki told me before, she started working as a butler a long time ago.

“Waah, so cute! How old is he?”

“Around six, I’d assume. The butler uniform is still far too big on him.”

While they opened up the album on the floor, the two were discussing this and that. Ahh, I wanna see that so badly. A small Konoe sounds adorable.

“Now then, next is...”

They seemingly made it through the entire album, and moved towards the studying desk in the corner of the room. On top of that desk were several thin books.

“Huh? What is this?”

Kureha’s gaze fell on the university notes. Written on the cover was...

“‘Certain kill! A manual on how to break that person’s heart!’, hmm.”

The second Kureha finished reading the title of the notes, Konoe twitched in shock, and swallowed her breath....Gyaaa! My nose is bleeding! My gynophobia is acting up again! Could you not hug me like that!?

“Onee-sama, what is this?”

“Now, who knows?”

“Um...it talks about breaking someone’s heart...Maybe it explains the Heart Break Shot<sup>3</sup>?”

“Fufu, I think you’re right. Subaru is interested in martial arts after all. Why not take a peek?”

“Yes! Let me see...‘Method 1: Call them to the back of the school’. Hmm...that’s an odd method. Maybe you need to certify the location before getting to the actual attack? This Heart Break Shot clearly is no joke.”

“This ‘Method 2: Call them up to the rooftop’ sounds interesting as well. Though I’m sure that Subaru is too embarrassed to actually do that.”

“Nya? Why is that? He’s calling the other person up there to fight, right?”

“Well, it is a fight to a certain degree. He has his own worries, you know.”

“Hmm...sounds complicated~”

The two were discussing something. Heart Break Shot...isn't that a certain-kill technique from that famous boxing manga? Why was she writing about that in her notes? Did she suddenly get into boxing?

“Ah, Kureha-chan, do you have a moment?”

“Yes, what is it?”

With Suzutsuki's voice, Kureha returned the notes to the desk. There seemed to be something she'd rather not have seen in there, because Konoe sighed in relief. However...

“O-Onee-sama! Is this possibly Subaru-sama's diary!?”

Because of Kureha's words, Konoe twitched yet again. She can't even get a minute to breathe, huh. Of course, I'm the same, it's a crimson river over here. Ahh, I feel so pathetic, it's not even funny. You good kids out there, don't copy this at home, you hear me?

“W-What should we do!?”

“I think a little peek won't hurt. He might have written about you, Kureha-chan.”

“Y-Yes...!” Kureha sounded both nervous and excited, as she flipped over the first page of the diary with a quivering hand.

“Waaaah!”

Gyaaaaa! What is this butler doing! Since Konoe was about to jump out the closet with a quiet but still screaming voice, I desperately held her back. I get that she must be embarrassed, but there's bigger problems than that. If she jumped out now, everything would be over.

“Nya? Did I just hear someone's voice?”

“Just your imagination. Let's focus on the diary.” Suzutsuki-san urged Kureha with a cheerful expression.



Right now, I understand. She must be Oda Nobunaga, but reborn. If not, there's no way another human being would be such a sadist.

“Stop!” Konoe's quiet scream this time didn't reach Kureha's ears.

As a result of that, the dice had fallen, and my little sister started reading out of the diary.

“Um...this is a bit before the school festival, I think. ‘21st of June. Clear sky. I fought with Jirou. Jirou's an idiot, such a big dummy. He broke his promise with me, and went with that tsundere instead...Not to mention that he and that girl are dating apparently...What should I do...I want to make up...I'm lonely...’.”

“Gyaaaah!”

“This is when we went on that trip during summer break. ‘14th of August. Clear sky. We all went to the sea together. It was really fun. But, yesterday, Jirou apparently went to Usami's place. Not to mention that she cooked for him. Damn it, I'll get better at cooking myself, just you wait...’.”

“Waaaah! Ahhhh!”

“This is the day before the sports festival. ‘18th of September. Cloudy. Today is the sports festival I've been waiting for. I can't wait for the three-legged race~ Just thinking about tomorrow is making my heart race, I can't sleep at all. The only question is if I can really pull off everything in the manual that the young lady gave me...’.”

“Waaaaaaah!”

“Ah, the newest one is from today. ‘20th of September. Clear sky. The entire day, my chest has been feeling weird. Thinking about living beneath the same roof...Ahhh, what embarrassing things am I writing about! Calm down, me! Regarding Nakuru-chan's case, I need to grab this chance...’.”

“Nyaaaaaaaah!”

I was afraid that Konoe might die from the embarrassment, that's how much she looked like she was suffering. Also, she's been

screaming the entire time, so will you catch on already, Kureha?

“This ‘Living beneath the same roof’ part, is he talking about me? Waah, to think Konoe-senpai felt this way! Not to mention that he mentioned NaruNaru...Did he awaken to his own feelings because of NaruNaru’s confession!?”

Calm down, my little sister. There’s no way that happened. She’s probably talking about the both of us moving in. Though I don’t get what that Nakuru part is about.

“Also, I feel like I’ve been hearing some girly screams for a while now...Is it a ghost?”

“Really? I don’t hear anything. Then again, this residence is pretty big, so there might be one.”

“Hawawawa, that’s...” Kureha started shaking, and blushed furiously.

...This is a chance. For better or worse, Konoe’s voice must have worked in some way.

“L-Let’s leave, Onee-sama. If we stay here for too long, Konoe-senpai might find us.”

“Fufu. Let’s do that, Kureha-chan.” Suzutsuki glanced over at the closet, and headed to the exit of the room.

...Barely safe, huh. Just dealing with my symptoms was all I could take. My consciousness is getting close to fading away, with my nose bleeding non-stop. As long as we wait for both of them to leave...

“Fuwah...”

There, Konoe let out a weird voice.

“What’s wrong? If you don’t keep it down, they’ll find us.”

“S-Sorry, but...”

“What is it?”

“I feel the urge to sneeze...!”

“.....”

Lord help me. At this rate, Konoe will get fired as a butler because of a sneeze.

“Nya? I definitely heard a voice just now.”

Urk...

“Now that’s come to this, maybe we should chase out this ghost? I am a bit scared, but my Mom even exorcised a ghost with a German suplex before.”

Not good, ghostbuster Kureha is suddenly all raring to go. Also, that part about Mom has to be a lie, although I could see her do that.

“Fuah...ah...”

“...!”

Konoe’s voice grew louder. She seems to be reaching her limit. Damn it, I have to somehow stop this sneeze. Maybe I should cover her mouth with my hands...No, the closet is too narrow, I can’t move my arms. What else? At this rate, Kureha will find out that Konoe is a girl. I gotta do something, because at this rate, Konoe will get fired, and Suzutsuki will stop help me with my gynophobia—

“...Ah.” There, I came up with one possible solution.

Suzutsuki Kanade gave me an important hint. What she did to me in the bath, the action that was supposed to fix my gynophobia...

“...!”

I can’t. No matter the situation, I can’t do that. But, if I let this go on, Konoe will get fired from her position as a butler. Then, she’ll be sad. I...don’t want to see her saddened face, even if it kills me.

“...Sorry, Konoe.” I made up my mind, and apologized to Konoe.

“Eh?” She showed me a confused reaction.

A short silence followed, and then, once Konoe’s sneeze was about to come out—I **kissed Konoe**.

“...Mmmn!?” Konoe was clearly surprised, and let out a groan.

However, I didn’t move away. If I stopped here, she’d probably go crazy. That’s why, just a bit longer, until Kureha and Suzutsuki leave.

“—Let’s leave, Kureha-chan.” Suzutsuki probably judged that fighting a ghost that didn’t exist wouldn’t be much fun, as she said so.

“Eh? But, Onee-sama.”

“It’s fine, there’s no ghost. It’s all just your imagination. More importantly, I’m a bit tired today, do you mind giving me a massage? You’re my maid, right?”

“Ah, yes! Understood, young lady!”

“Then, let’s go.”

This time, they left for good. Right after the door closed—

“Woah!?”

Konoe pushed me out of the closet. I couldn’t keep my balance, and fell directly onto the floor. Because of my gynophobia still flaring up, I failed to even stand up properly.

“...!”

Reflexively, I touched my lips. There, I still felt the faint sensation of Konoe’s soft lips, remaining on my skin. That’s right, although it was to protect her secret, I went ahead and k-k-k-kissed her...

“S-Sorry! I couldn’t come up with anything else, so I...!” I immediately turned towards Konoe, desperately apologizing.

She also lost strength in her legs, falling down to the carpet, barely keeping herself up with one hand. However...

“!?”

The scenery that was in front of my eyes left me utterly baffled. Thinking about it, when Konoe leaped into the closet, I couldn't fully grasp her appearance. Maybe Konoe had taken off the swimsuit in a panic, but fell over while wearing nothing at all. There, Kureha opened the door, so she had to barge into the closet, hiding there together with me. That's why, right now...

“...Ah.”

She must have caught on to my gaze. As she stood there, fully naked, she blinked in confusion. The shock of what is going on probably hampered her thought process. Silence followed, which felt painfully long as it filled the room.

“K-Konoe!?”

There, like the strings of a puppet had been cut, Konoe collapsed to the ground, losing consciousness.

“!”

As a result of that, her defenseless body was right in my view. Before I could see anything, I dodged and ran to the bed, grabbed a blanket, and covered Konoe's body with that. Of course, without taking a single glance at her body.

“.....”

No, I wasn't lying, okay. I don't mind betting my pride on that. Maybe Konoe passed out because I saw her naked, maybe it was because of the kiss...I don't know which it could be, but I definitely wouldn't use this kind of situation for myself.

“Uuuu...Kissed...Jirou...” Konoe let out a faint groan, mumbling in her sleep.

A-Anyway, I'll just go back to my tent for today, and apologize one more time tomorrow. Thinking about that, I remembered the scenery from just now, and my heart skipped a beat. Rubbing my reddened cheeks, I felt how hot they were. Damn it, how am I supposed to look

her in the eyes...!

“...G-Good night, Konoe.” I muttered, and quietly left the room.

Either way, with this, my first day at work ended, but it was only the beginning of the coming storm, is what I felt.

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1 Short for Momotaro Densetsu, which sounds like Japanese monopoly if you ask me lul

2 The original goes Su -> Su (Vinegar) -> ki (which would be like) -> sukiyaki.

3 A technique from Hajime no Ippo



# Chapter 4: Rabbit-eared maid expedition team

“Hmmm, so you were hiding in that closet after all.”

The morning after that stressful incident arrived, basically my second day of working at the Suzutsuki Residence. After all classes for the day ended, and I made my home, I explained what exactly had happened to Suzutsuki. Or rather, I was forced to explain. The second I set foot inside the residence, Suzutsuki called me to the banquet hall. Of course, I was wearing the dog costume as my uniform.

“That’s not fair. Just when I thought someone was hiding there, it turned out to be the two of you, having fun between yourselves.” Suzutsuki-san smiled.

Naturally, I kept the part of Konoe being naked or me k-k-k-kissing her a secret. Not like I could even, I still haven’t fully dealt with the repercussions of my own actions. That also seemed to be the case for Konoe. Either she was too embarrassed after being seen naked, or shocked because of my sudden kiss, but she’s been staying in her room all day. Subaru-sama is in her shut-in mode.

“But, why is she just holing up inside her room? That never happened before.”

“W-Who knows? I have no clue.”

“Hmmmm.” The young lady narrowed her eyes, and closely inspected me.

Knowing her, she probably would catch on to that reason sooner or later.

“Well, it’s fine. Thanks to that, I can take another day off school.”

“Since you took a day off yesterday, it’d be weird if you’re suddenly back to full energy.”



“That is true, but I’m also lacking a bit of sleep.”

“Lacking sleep?”

“Recently, I have had trouble falling asleep.”

“Hmmm.”

“It’s not like my body is burning up with passion or anything though.”

“Nobody asked about that.”

“But you were thinking about it?”

“I wasn’t thinking about it either!”

“Anyway, my body feels a bit sluggish. Probably because I didn’t get much sleep lately.” Suzutsuki let out an adorable yawn. “That reminds me, where is Kureha-chan?”

“She has club activities today, so she’s coming home late.”

“Then, we’re lacking one person right now. Can’t rely on Subaru either.”

“Yeah, I doubt she’ll come out anytime soon.”

After all, even when Kureha and Suzutsuki tried to talk to her, she wouldn’t even let them in. I thought of checking on her as well, but feared that I might just make things worse if I did, so I decided against it. I feel like it’s better for me to just leave her alone.

“...My goodness, we have Jirou-kun as a servant, and yet she seems fully intent on wasting this chance.”

“Hm?”

“Ah, don’t worry about it. Just me talking to myself.” Suzutsuki-san flashed a profound smile.

She’s probably thinking of a way to tease me again, I bet. Not to mention that this is her home base, her own ground. On top of that,

with the Suzutsuki fanatic Ichigo-san always observing what I'm doing, I can't relax for even a second.

"Also, your job today will be cleaning. Since you finished the residence yesterday, you'll move to the garden today."

"Urk..."

Hey now, are you kidding me? I'm supposed to clean that entire garden myself?

"Rest assured, you won't be forced to finish it all in one day. Also, I'll make sure you get to eat at a reasonable time."

"At least the menu is a bit better than before."

I guess even Ichigo-san felt bad giving me only sugar cubes, because she properly gave me some breakfast (although only instant ramen with rice). It's at least better than sugar cubes.

"Oh yeah, I was a bit surprised during breakfast."

"Why is that?"

"I mean, normally servants and master wouldn't eat breakfast together, right?"

I thought that us servants would be eating breakfast during a different time, at a different place, but to my surprise, we all sat at the same dinner table. I was curious about that, but it seemed to be a Suzutsuki Family rule, saying that servants are like family, so you all eat together.

"Normally it's different, but right now we're eating together. No idea how other people do it, but I think that eating with everyone is much more enjoyable. If not for that, I would have to eat all on my own."

"Yeah, since you're the only master present right now."

Suzutuski's parents, and even the old man, are currently out of the house, which leaves Suzutsuki as our only master. She has full control over this place right now.

“Oh yeah, the reason you took me and Kureha in as servants is because another servant has similar circumstances to ours, right?”

“Indeed, she’s a girl called Hinata Mayoi. Right now, she’s hospitalized because of an appendix. She lost her home like you two did, and ended up seeking refuge here at our residence. After a lot of back and forths, we took her in as a servant.”

“Yeah, makes sense that you can’t just let us stay for free, then, but...”

I still feel like—that’s not the only reason. Of course, I have no proof for that. It’s just my intuition, which starts beeping because we’re talking about that rich lady. She always has ulterior motives.

“Well, that’s not the only reason I made you and Kureha-chan servants here.”

“Eh?”

Surprisingly enough, Suzutsuki answered my doubts for myself. And if that wasn’t enough, she showed a perfect smile that would make Audrey Hepburn blush, as she continued.

“Can’t forget about that incident with Nakuru-chan.”

“Are you...talking about that confession?”

“Indeed. She’s been on the attack ever since, and it would be troublesome if you started dating her. I’d lose my precious time of having fun and teasing you.”

“Yeah, you’re worrying for nothing, that won’t happen.”

Also, I’m not your plaything, you hear me. I feel like I’m always dancing on the top of your palm.

“It’s important to have fun. When it comes to my parents, or even Nagare, staying at this residence would have been pretty lonely. I figured that keeping you two here would make it more lively. Not to mention...”

“...What?”

“I’ve become Yamitsuki-san now, so I need to bully you some more.”

“...’Zat so.”

Damn Devil Suzutsuki, she still wants to play around with me after all. I’m clearly being treated like some puppy.

“.....”

But...something doesn’t add up.

—I’ll continue to bully you from now on.

That’s what Suzutsuki told me before the sports festival started. Thinking about it, it doesn’t really make much sense. The word ‘bully’ has such a negative connotation. Although Suzutsuki loved to tease me here and there, it was never so extreme. It was only her keeping up a nice face to have fun behind the scenes. However right now, she’s acting more like the villainess, the evil of the wrestling match, or as she said it—Yamitsuki-san.

It just doesn’t make any sense. It’s almost like she’s trying to be the antagonist, so that my affection towards her lowers...

“However, I’m sure that things will get even more noisy from now on.”

“Eh?”

Because of Suzutsuki’s profound words, I found my thoughts coming to a halt. Even more noisy? I feel like this right now is plenty already, we feel like we’re a circus group, with the circus leader being the young lady. Other circus members are the yandere maid, and the cross-dressing butler. We have my little sister as the lion, and I’m the lion tamer. Of course, I would fail miserably every time, which generates laughter from the audience.

“She should be coming soon.”

“Coming soon...?”

Who? Right as I wanted to ask that, someone knocked on the door. Shortly after, the door opened and a single maid walked in. Her uniform was a bit different from the one worn by Ichigo-san or Kureha, but the basic design looked familiar.

“...Masamune?”

That’s right, I was looking at Usami Masamune. She had her hair in her usual twintails, wearing the same maid uniform she had kept on during her part-time job at the maid cafe. For some reason however, she gave me a really displeased look.

♀ × ♂

“As you can see, Usami-san will be working at our residence starting today.” Our current master delivered the news with an awfully calm and nonchalant expression.

...Now hold on a damn second, she’s going to work here? Are you saying that she’ll become a servant like we are?

“Hey, what is this about?” I walked over to Masamune, asking her.

Immediately after, she blew a fuse and screamed at me.

“How would I know! When I went to work today, I was ordered to come here, no questions asked!”

“By who?”

“The store manager, of course! More importantly, Suzutsuki Kanade! This is all your doing, right!?”

It seems like she really is not a big fan of this situation. This kind of harsh attitude was new, even for Masamune.

“What might you be talking about?”

“Don’t play dumb! You probably pulled some secret exchange with the store manager, right!?”

“Do you have any proof for that?”

“The store manager’s pupils looked like \$ signs! Not to mention that she gave me the weird order of coming here while wearing my maid uniform!”

“Maybe because it’s a cute uniform?”

“As a result of that, I was embarrassed as all hell while walking through town!” The nasty rabbit was boiling with rage.

I guess this is just how cruel society and labour can be. To think she was forced to walk through town while cosplaying, it really is all going downhill.

“Urk...Why do I have to work as a maid here of all the places...”

“Don’t act like this is some tragedy. Rest assured, I did my studying already.”

“Studying...?” Masamune asked, to which Suzutsuki grinned, and took out a small book.

Written on the cover, it said...

“‘A Guide On How To Keep A Pet Rabbit: Master It In 5 Minutes!’, see.”

“You’re making fun of me, right!?”

“Of course, mastering it in five minutes is practically impossible.”

“That’s not what I meant!”

“Should we get to some light revision? ‘Step 1: Rabbits are herbivores’.”

“That sure is a simple first step!”

“‘Step 2: You cannot put a drenched rabbit into a microwave’.”

“That’s just common sense!?”

“‘Step 3: Rabbits die if they get too lonely, pyon...’.”

“That’s just a misconception! Also, what do you mean by ‘pyon’!?”

“You must be going through a lot, Unagi<sup>1</sup>-san.”

“It’s not Unagi, it’s U-Sa-Gi! Wait, stop! My name is Usami!”

“Having these kinds of exchanges really helps me relax as of late.”

“Don’t use people as mental stabilizers!” Masamune was gasping for air, as she relentlessly threw in retorts.

...Wow. You really don’t need to retort on every little thing. You’ll just be exhausted like you ran a marathon. It’s like ‘Sarai<sup>2</sup>’ is playing in the background.

“I mean, why didn’t you just decline then?”

I feel like that would be an obvious doubt. Masamune clearly was popular in the maid cafe, so she could have just stayed there if you ask me.

“Urk...I had my own...you know, circumstances.”

“...Was the pay too juicy to decline?”

“How did you know!?”

“I mean...”

That’s pretty much the only reason I could see that would make you accept this. Because of Masamune’s family circumstances, she’s pretty much living a poor life. Best evidenced by the fact that she’s actually living in a haunted flat. If anything, she looks like she has \$ signs as pupils.

“Hey! What’s that belittling gaze about! We’re talking about a solid 10.000 yen a day, okay!? And, I was guaranteed food and a place to sleep if I stayed here!”

“Even so, you’ll be working as a maid, right?”

Not to mention her master being Suzutsuki Kanade. It’s like she

formed a pact with the devil. Nothing good can come out of this. Then again, not like I'm one to talk.

"Hmpf, if it's for my own lifestyle, I can put up with a lot of things. Not to mention..."

"Not to mention?"

"...I-I was a bit curious...how you were doing here. With the fire the day before yesterday, I was there, and yet...unlike Suzutsuki Kanade, I couldn't do anything..." She whispered with a voice about to disappear.

So, was she worried about me and Kureha? I mean, she was there when we learned of the fact that our house burned down, so she must be at least curious about how we're doing...At the root of it all, she really is kind.

"...Hm?"

But, wait a second. Something still doesn't add up. Isn't this weird? Suzutsuki mentioned that she had trouble dealing with Masamune, right? They're natural enemies, even. After all, Masamune can see right through Suzutsuki's nonsense, which makes sense. Yet, why would Suzutsuki invite her to her homebase?

"Kanade-ojousama."

Right after someone knocked on the door, I heard a robotic voice. It was undoubtedly Ichigo-san. She had no expression on her face as always, walking towards us.

"Ichigo, she'll be a temporary maid starting today. Her name is Usami-san, so please take good care of her."

"Yes. Nice to meet you, newcomer."

"H-Hello." Masasmune gave an awkward greeting.

She never stops being shy around strangers huh, almost like an actual rabbit.



“However, Kanade-ojousama, this isn’t the time for self-introductions.”

“Hm? Did something happen?” Suzutsuki tilted her head.

Ichigo-san kept a serious tone, and explained.

“We have an intruder.”

“What?”

Both mine and Masamune’s voice overlapped. An intruder? Where did that come from?

“My, that sounds troublesome.”

“My deepest apologies, the security seems to have missed them...”

“Don’t worry about it. The question is how we deal with them from now on. How many intruders?”

“Only one. However, we cannot relax. What should we do?”

“As we always would. This is an order, Ichigo. Capture this intruder as quickly as possible.”

“Understood, Kanade-ojousama.” The maid deeply lowered her head.

Hey now, when did this turn into some battle manga? Not to mention capture? If the intruder is a thief or someone of that level, shouldn’t we be calling 110 instead?

“Ichigo-san.”

I couldn’t allow there to be any victims, so I thought I should report to my senior.

“What is it, Odd Jobs-san.”

“If that intruder is a thief, wouldn’t it be much simpler to call the police?”

“We can’t do that. The intruder is not a thief.”

“A robber?”

“NO. Something even more terrifying.” Ichigo-san’s expression stayed serious.

Maybe it’s Mom? When we were caught in the middle of a bank robbery before, she completely rendered all of the robbers immobile in a mere five minutes. She’s much more terrifying than them.

“Or rather, it’s not even a human.”

“Eh?”

“It’s fluffy, with thick fur, long ears and crimson eyes, a true little monster...”

“.....”

Um...is that possibly...

“A rabbit?”

“YES. I don’t know how, but it must have somehow found its way in here.”

“But, is there really any need to panic like this...”

“Of course. Rabbits can bite through the electricity cords of this residence, and create a fire without us knowing.”

I see. Still, to think it was a rabbit. Maybe it ran away from its owner, or escaped a pet shop.

“However, it’s much better than **that**.”

“That?”

“Yes. The monster that has continued to fight humans for hundreds of years now. Clad in dark armor, it rapidly grows its numbers...like the devil himself...”

“...Are you talking about a—”

“Stop that, Jirou-kun. We don’t use such an accursed name. Just call it G<sup>3</sup>, that’s more than enough.”

“I mean, I get that, but...”

Naturally, she’s not talking about a Gun\*am, nor about Yomiuri G\*ants<sup>4</sup>. Basically, she’s talking about the black and aggressive insects that love invading other people’s homes, said there to be at least 30 if you see a single one.

“Now that you mention it, one of them managed to invade this residence before.”

“It’s been seven years since then. I have not forgotten once. The grave damages befalling this residence...”

“How grave was that, then?”

“Yes. So much smoke. All because of Subaru.”

“Because of Konoe?”

“The fire alarm went off.”

“...Ahh.”

Ahh, I see. But, is that really something worth calling grave damage?

“To think he would blow up the entire room they had invaded with dynamite.”

“That’s where the smoke came from!?”

“The fire alarm worked just fine.”

“And what good did that do!?”

“The only saving grace is that she didn’t use much gunpowder. With another 500g, the entire place would have been blown to smithereens.”

“.....”

“This is all Subaru’s fault, since he stole these explosives from the construction grounds.”

“Hehe, that Subaru. So clumsy, and so cute.”

“Kanade-ojousama, this isn’t enough to just laugh off. Have you forgotten the headlines of the following day’s newspaper? It said ‘Break of Japanese Safety! A Terrorist Attack in a Usually Peaceful Residential District!?’.”

“Pushing away the mass media was a lot of trouble back then. We somehow covered it up with a gas explosion though.”

“...Well, I guess he really just hates them after all.”

Never met a girl who actually likes cockroaches. Though, blowing up this entire place is taking things a bit too far.

“Hmpf, what’s the problem? It’s just some G.”

However, the other girl in the room, Masamune, seemed fairly calm about this. That’s the nasty rabbit for you. Now that’s some energy to have, I want to keep her at home.

“I mean, they’re only the size of a human, right?”

“Isn’t that bit too big!”

“Eh? Isn’t that normal?”

“In what way!? That would bring ruin to humanity as a whole!”

“They often stand on my pillow.”

“Stand!? In what way!?”

“On two legs?”

“They’re not some panda! They’re crawling on the ground!”

“That’s not scary at all!”

“I’m terrified of your home, okay!?”

“I’ve been scared from the very beginning, but I’ve gotten used to it.”

“Used to it...”

“Recently, I’ve even been talking to them.”

“Are you crazy!?”

“Wouldn’t it be better to keep a steady communication?”

“Those things don’t have any common sense or humanity in them!”

“They started it with ‘Won’t you become friends with me?’ though.”

“Are you being serious!?”

Scary. I can’t even imagine human-sized Gs just standing there, in my own home. It sounds like it would be out of a horror movie<sup>5</sup>. Also... I’m having trouble believing this. Our conversations clearly don’t seem to match up. Maybe we think of different things when we talk about Gs?

“Masamune, what do you think a G is?”

“Huh? You were talking with me, and yet didn’t even know what that is? Makes sense why it seemed like we were talking past each other.” Masamune said, and approached my ear.

She probably didn’t want to trigger Suzutsuki after her previous statement of ‘Don’t say its name’.

“—You’re talking about ghosts, right?”

“What?”

“Don’t ‘What?’ me. The initial is G, right? Then, it has to be a ghost. But, why would they be here? Is this built on a graveyard or a hospital?”

“.....”

Ahh, right. GHOST, I see. That would explain a lot of things. After all, her flat is like a haunted house. I can see a ghost of about 170cm

standing on her pillow. That's a relief...well, not really. However, if I keep this misunderstanding going, it might complicate things later. I was just trying to think of a way of achieving that, when...

"Newcomer. The G you're talking about is different from the G we're talking about."

"Eh?" Masamune seemed confused, as Ichigo-san approached her ears, and started whispering.

She was probably explaining the truth to her. After all, Masamune's face slowly turned pale.

"Eh? G is...that?"

"YES. What's wrong? Are you scared after all?"

"O-O-O-Of course I'm not! I'm totally fine, really!" Masamune tried to stay calm, showing a twitching smile. "That's right, compared to the ghost at my place, this is nothing."

"Really?"

"Really."

"Ah, newcomer, there's a G at your feet."

"Kyaaaaaaah!?" Masamune jumped up a solid 30cm.

Of course, there was no G around. It was just a classic trap. Geez, what do you mean you're not scared? You screamed like a little girl...

"Nooooo!"

"Guheh!?"

Masamune seemingly started panicking, as she clung to my neck. Gyaaaaaaah, stop that! My gynophobia! If you hug me that aggressively, my gynophobia will make me pass out!

"Nooo! Get away! Don't come over here!"

"L-Let go of me, Masamune!"

“No! No no no no! Don’t cast me aside! Please, let me stay with you!”

“Hey, I’m begging you here, just calm down a bit...Geho!?”

**Crack**, Masamune’s slender arms wrapped around my neck. This is bad, this isn’t even about my gynophobia anymore. It’s a classic dead or alive. I’ll be killed by a maid, with a choke sleeper.

“Hic....Waaah...I’m scared...!”

Her nasty attitude vanished elsewhere, as she started weeping. She was like any other weak and fragile girl. However, I want to cry myself. She kept pushing her body onto me, to which her sweet and girly scent tickled my nose, her softness being conveyed even through my costume. The sensation of a girl...

“Urk...”

...Not good, I’ll pass out for real...

“Newcomer, how long do you plan on clinging to him?” Ichigo-san’s robotic voice rang out.

In response to that, Masamune let out a dumbfounded ‘Eh?’, and returned to reality. And then, she confirmed her own situation.

“!”

She finally realized that Ichigo-san was just playing with her, and probably felt embarrassed at the fact that she was still clinging to me, as she started blushing furiously, and jumped away from me.

“W-Why were you clinging to me like that?!”

“Excuse me, but I think you got it backwards...”

“Shut up! Dummy! Stupid chicken! I wasn’t scared at all! It’s because you just...!”

“NO. You most certainly were quite scared.”

“Wha...what are you saying, um...”

“Just call me ‘Ichigo-san’, I am referring to you as ‘Newcomer’ after all.”

“Then...Ichigo-san, prove it to me. There’s no way I was that scared...”

“Nooo! Get away! Don’t come over here!”

“!?”

“No! No no no no! Don’t cast me aside! Please, let me stay with you!”

“~~~!”

“This has been a reenactment of the happenings just now.”

“Lies! That’s not true! There’s no way I would act so embarrassing...”

“Ah, a real G this time.”

“Kyaaaaaaa!” Masamune screamed one more time, clinging to my neck again.

No, you’re absolutely terrified. Also, can you just stay away from me right now? My nose will actually start bleeding.

“Newcomer, that was a lie again.”

“...!?”

“It’s fine, we won’t be chasing after a G, but a mere rabbit. That’s why, you don’t have to be so terrified.”

“I-I’m not scared or anything...”

“I see. Then...it is time we depart. Kanade-ojousama, please stay here safely.”

“I’m counting on you, Ichigo.”

“Leave it to me.”



With confident steps, Ichigo-san stepped out onto the hallway. Seems like she's motivated for a hunt this time. With her eyepatch, she looks like a real hunter. Right now, it felt like I could hear Wagner's 'Ride of the Valkyries'.

"H-Hmpf! What, I wasn't that scared after all!"

Masamune finally moved away from me, and stomped after Ichigo-san. I let out a sigh, and chased after the two. Either way, this counts as the start of our searching trip through the Suzutsuki Residence. The members this time around were two maids, and one odd jobs costume. What an unreliable party, really. It's like we're a dog, ape, and pheasant from Momotarou. We might even get some sweet dumplings after this. And if that wasn't enough, our master was Suzutsuki Kanade.

"Wait a second."

See, talk about the devil. Right as we walked down the hallway, Suzutsuki came after us. She showed a teasing grin on her face, like a child about to prank its parents.

"Usami-san, can I have a moment?"

"What?"

"Come on, you don't need to be so on edge, it's just a present."

"A present?"

"Yes, since you're going hunting for a rabbit, you need to put this on." Suzutsuki said, and offered something to Masamune.

They're bunny ears. The bunny ears hung down a headband, looking like your usual cosplay goods, colored pure white.

"By the way, this is an order. If you don't wear this, I'll have to reduce your salary."

"....."

Pride and salary were on the line. Put between the two choices,

Masamune took a solid 30 minutes to decide.

♀ × ♂

“...So, where did it go?”

Shortly after we left the banquet hall, I asked Ichigo-san, who was guiding us through the residence.

“First, the kitchen. That’s why we’ll go there first. It managed to escape me then, but now we capture it.” Ichigo-san had no expression whatsoever as always, but I could hear a faint passion in her voice.

From her skirt, I could hear a metallic rattling sound. It’s probably some kind of weapon she probably picked up.

“Aren’t you a bit too well-prepared?”

“NO. A lion doesn’t hold back even against a rabbit. This is the same.

“You’re a maid, you can’t go hunting.”

“What a shame.”

“...Also, there’s one more thing I wanted to ask.”

“YES?”

“You’re a maid, so why do you have so many weapons?”

Apparently, her only weapon isn’t just a chainsaw. A crowbar, a knife, an ice pick, a fork...and so on. She’s clearly violating all sorts of weapon laws.

“...Hm.” Ichigo-san seemed to be thinking about my words for a moment, and then... “.....Hobby.”

Yeah, well, there’s really too many parts for me to retort on, but I’m scared to ask any more, so I’ll leave it at that. That’s right, everybody has their own hobby...although I feel like the people around me are a bit too different.

“Urk...Why do I have to do this...” The maid with bunny ears grit her

teeth as she groaned.

She says so, but I think those bunny ears look pretty good on her.

“Stupid chicken, what are you staring at me for?”

“I was just thinking that you were changing from Usamin to Usamimin.”

“Why do you make me sound like some monster out of a game!? Geez, I’m not wearing this because I want to...” Masamune bit her lip.

I should go tell the store manager. If you want more customers, you need to come up with a plan to make Masamune wear this, as well as the other maids.

“—Arrival.” Ichigo-san announced this with as much of a robotic voice as always.

It’s the kitchen, a clean space with no dirt in sight. So this is where the target might be hiding.

“...NO. It doesn’t seem to be here. Must have moved.” The eyepatch maid shook her head.

Eh? What, she only looked around, and yet...

“I don’t feel the presence of a living being here.”

“.....”

Does she have some sort of radar? I didn’t think she’d be judging that solely based on presence and whatever. I don’t know if she’s being serious, but all I have to do is listen to orders.

“Then, should we move? Now that it’s come to this, we have to search every small corner...”

“NO. We will recharge.”

“What?”

“You cannot fight with an empty stomach.” She said, and sat down at a kitchen chair, taking out a fork from somewhere, and held it in both her hands.

“Stomach’s empty. Anything is fine, just make it.”

“.....”

“As a junior, you’re supposed to listen to your senior’s request.”

“.....”

“If possible, I’d like some pancakes.”

“.....”

Is this woman looking down on me? It might seem like quite the ridiculous request, but if I’m not careful and don’t respond to her wishes, I might be turned into a carpaccio with those weapons of hers. Then again, I’m also feeling a bit hungry right now, so it would probably be for the best if I replenish some energy myself. Alright, time to...

“Sorry, Masamune.”

“Huh!? Why me!?”

“Well, I know it’s pathetic, but I don’t know how to make it.”

“It’s pancakes! As long as you have the ingredients, you can make it no problem!”

“But, I’m sure they’d be much more delicious if you made them.”

I was speaking my mind here. Masamune’s cooking skill isn’t anything to scoff at. The meat and potato stew I ate this summer was great, so me wanting to eat more of her cooking was just me being honest.

“~~~! O-Okay! If you’re that adamant on it, I’ll make some. But, I’ll eat some as well!” She let out a sigh, and moved towards the fridge to look for ingredients.

Hmmm, she's acting like she hates it, but I bet she probably likes cooking. I've seen how much she enjoyed herself when she was cooking after all.

“.....”

Now, after waiting for around ten minutes, Masamune lined up steamy hot pancakes on the kitchen table.

“I actually love pancakes.” After giving a comment with no intonation or expression resembling her words, Ichigo-san grabbed a piece of the pancakes, and carried it to her mouth.

At least she's not actually a robot. She might look like an adult on the outside, but she now seemed like a child who simply loved pancakes.

“Stupid chicken, it'll get cold if you don't eat them soon.”

“Yeah, thanks.”

“N-No biggie. It wasn't hard or anything. But, you should be more thankful”.

“You're right. Thanks a lot.” I gave my thanks, and carried a piece of a pancake to my mouth.

I immediately tasted the soft and fluffy consistency, together with the sweetness of maple syrup...yeah, delicious. I guess eating some childish food like this doesn't hurt once in a while.

“Why don't you become the chef here?” Ichigo-san seemed to agree with me, as she asked this with sparkling eyes.

“Don't you already have a chef?”

“YES. However, she is NO. She is too much of a deviant.”

“I'm not a deviant, but I'd rather not be a chef. I don't have that big of a repertoire to begin with.” Masamune declined, and averted her gaze.

Hmmm, she really is cold towards random people. Though I feel like

it's gotten a bit better at least. When she first met me, she was ice cold to me, but now we're talking just fine. Maybe she's gotten better at actually believing other people.

"By the way." There, Ichigo-san licked up some maple syrup from her lips, and spoke up. "Are you two dating?"

Both Masamune and I froze at the exact same moment. W-Water! I can't breathe! The pancakes went down the wrong pipe!

"...YES?"

"N-N-Not at all! NO, okay, NO! Who would go out with a stupid chicken like him!?" Masamune recovered a bit faster than me, and frantically denied Ichigo-san's assumption.

You don't need to be that desperate, you know? Also, why are you slapping me on the back, Masamune-san? You'll force up all the pancakes I already gulped down.

"...Shame. If only you two were dating."

"What?"

"No, just talking to myself. More importantly, we finished recharging. Departure."



Ichigo-san stood up like the previous exchange didn't happen. I finally was able to breathe again after gushing some water down my throat, and followed after her. If only we were dating? Why? What does she gain from that?

"So, where do we go now?" Masamune asked after we left the kitchen.

Since Ichigo-san spotted it around here, there's a good chance that it might be nearby. It feels like we're inside Alice in Wonderland.

"Odd Jobs-san, can you trace after its scent?"

"What am I, some police dog?"

"...So why did you even tag along?"

"That's what you expected from me!?"

"Can't help it then, we'll search through the residence." The eyepatch maid walked on ahead.

She's still fully intent on treating me as a dog because I'm wearing this costume? Maybe she just hates my guts. Either way, with a bit of banter like this, we moved through the hallways of the Suzutsuki Residence. The inside of these hallways were decorated with vases, paintings, and other expensive-looking furniture, every single thing just gorgeous to look at.

"If I sold this, I could live for an entire month..."

Masamune seemingly felt similar to me, as she looked at all the antique items with a resentful gaze. Yeah, that's the kind of commoner reaction I would expect. Really makes me realize how we live in two different worlds.

"Let's check in here next."

As the two of us were entranced by the Suzutsuki Residence, Ichigo-san stopped in front of a single room...Hold on, are you serious?

"Subaru." Ichigo-san knocked on the room's door, calling out to the person inside.

Immediately after, I heard an alto voice, responding with 'What?'. That's right, this is Konoe's room. To the right, you can now see the crossdressing butler's room, ladies and gentlemen.

"Ichigo. What do you want?"



“Something important. So, open the door, will you?”

“...Don’t wanna.” For some reason, Konoe immediately rejected that request. “I’ll stay here in my room for a while, so leave.”

“.....”

This is bad, Subaru-sama turned into an actual shut-in. The reason for that has to be yesterday’s incident, I bet. Ahh, so awkward. With what face should I even meet her from now on.

“NO. Open the door.”

“No.”

“Staying in your room for too long is poison for your body.”

“Just for a little while. Once I’ve calmed down and thought everything through, I’ll go back to my work.”

“Don’t say that, you could eat some delicious pancakes right now.”

“Urk...I-I don’t care...” Or so she said, but I heard faint grumbling across the door, most likely from her stomach.

She’s clearly hungry, what an easy fellow.

“Shame. They were so delicious. Even Odd Jobs-san was thoroughly enjoying them.”

“Wha...! Not fair! Everyone eating together while leaving me out!”

“I thought you didn’t want to eat any?”

“Urk...!”

“Now, the newcomer will make some more for you, so come on out.”

“Newcomer? ...Ah, Usami. The young lady mentioned she would be working here starting today.”

“YES. Her pancakes are the best. So, open up already.”

“~~~!”

That’s Ichigo-san for you, she’s been living together with Konoe for a while, so she knows how she ticks. Though, it’s a bit doubtful if Masamune will actually make pancakes again.

“...N-No.”

However, our dear butler was quite obstinate today. She really wants to be alone today, huh. Or, she just doesn’t want to run into me.

“I see. It can’t be helped, then.” Surprisingly enough, Ichigo-san gave up fairly quickly.

Then, she beckoned me and Masamune over, whispering to us.

“Help me out. We need to get Subaru out of there.”

“How?”

“I call it...the Gate of the Celestial Cave<sup>6</sup> Operation.”

“Isn’t that...”

It’s part of an old legend, where the gods held a party in order to draw out a god hiding in a cave by throwing a party and making them jealous.

“So basically, we just have to talk about something that will get him invested.”

“For example?”

“For example, something like.....”

“...!? Why does it have to be something so embarrassing!?”

Masamune had stayed quiet until now, but spoke up to protest immediately after hearing of Ichigo-san’s plan. Personally, I can’t blame her. It is pretty embarrassing.

“That’s something he’s interested in after all.”

“B-But...!”

“Of course, the ones acting will be Odd Jobs-san and Newcomer.”

“!?”

“It can’t be helped, Odd Jobs-san and I barely have known each other for a few days, so it wouldn’t make much sense.”

“B-But, doing that with the stupid chicken is...”

“If you say no, then I’ll be lowering your salary.”

“~~~!” Masamune groaned in despair, and turned towards me.

“Stupid chicken, I’m only doing this for my salary. I need to do this in order to survive, so don’t get the wrong idea, okay.”

“Y-Yeah.”

“You get that!?”

“I-I understand!”

Woah, Masamune was actually persuaded. In preparation, she took off her bunny ears. I guess she’s too embarrassed to act that out with those on.

“Start the show. Knowing Subaru, he is definitely listening in on us. If you do what I told you, he should come jumping out with ‘No licentious actions allowed in the young lady’s residence!’, I bet.”  
Ichigo-san showed us her thumb, praying for our luck in battle.

Or, that’s what it felt like at least.

“S-Stupid chicken...” With tension filling her face, Masamune called out to me.

Then, she put her hands together in front of my chest, her eyes dampened as they looked at me...

“...Kiss me...!”

The plan for me was to say ‘Yeah! I am in love with your eyes, baby!’,

but right after Masamune finished her sentence, the door to Konoe's room shot open. Since it was filled with momentum, the door slammed right into my body, sending me flying with a 'Guha!?', as I slammed into the wall.

"N-No! No licentious actions allowed in the young lady's residence... Huh?" After opening the door with a beet red face, Konoe stared at me in disbelief.

You're amazing, Ichigo-san. You perfectly guessed Subaru-sama's actions.

"Subaru, thanks for opening the door." Ichigo-san gave her gratitude with no emotion in her voice, as she grabbed the door.

Konoe on her part screamed 'Y-You set me up!?' and tried to close the door again, but...

"...!"

Her eyes met with mine, and she froze up. Of course, I doubt that happened because she saw me splattered against the wall. Immediately after, the atmosphere froze up. An awkward silence was born between the two of us. Following that, Konoe blushed furiously, and averted her gaze. I did the same as her...but, why. I'm the one who forced myself onto her. I should apologize. No, I have to apologize. And yet...

"...!"

I can't. Because of the scenery yesterday, I couldn't even force out a voice. Not to mention that my heart keeps on racing. This didn't even happen when I was kissed by Suzutsuki. Just what is happening to me?

"Stupid chicken, why are you just staying quiet like that?" Masamune seemingly thought of my reaction as weird, as she gave me a dubious gaze.

"I-It's nothing. More importantly, let's go inside."

I needed to change the topic as quickly as possible. I can't do it right

now. Neither Konoe nor I are in any shape that would allow any proper conversation. I'll have to wait a bit longer.

"Oh yeah, you're wearing quite the adorable pajamas, Subaru-sama."

"Wha...!?"

"...Cats?"

"~~~!?"

Having her own appearance pointed out by the bunny-eared maid Masamune, Konoe blushed even more furiously, as she pulled down the hem of her pajamas. Indeed, Konoe's pajama had adorable cat designs imprinted on it. It's the exact kind of design Kureha would like a lot. Despite her tone of voice, Konoe really is feminine.

"You're wrong! Normally I'm not wearing this! I just happened to put it on today!"

"Lie. You really love that pajama, I know that. You even have another two, just in a different color."

"Shut up! You be quiet, Ichigo!"

"You don't have to feel so embarrassed about this, your pajamas aren't anything embarrassing."

"They are to me, okay!"

"At least you're wearing something. I don't wear anything when I sleep."

"N-N-N-Nobody asked for that information!" Subaru-sama blushed even more furiously during her exchange with Ichigo-san.

Um, not wearing anything...so you sleep naked? Waah, I can't see that happening at all. Despite having no expression, she sure is bold.

"Stupid chicken, you're thinking of something lewd, right?"

"!?"

This nasty rabbit is no joke, she saw right through me with a single glance, as she was staring at me from the side.

“Pervert. Are you that crazy about a girl’s naked body?”

“Y-You’re wrong! I most definitely wasn’t imagining this maid sleeping butt-naked!”

“Sometimes I really envy that honesty of yours...”

“I don’t want to hear that from you, you lewd rabbit!”

“Huuuh!? W-Who’s a lewd rabbit!? Ah, I see, you want to tease me after I say ‘Did you know? The only other living beings who are always in heat except humans are rabbits’, right?!”

“Who said that!?”

What a lively example, alright. She probably was teased about this a lot when she was younger. Then again, I can see that happening with how profound her imagination is.

“Wah, crazy.”

Upon entering Konoe’s room, the first one to react was Masamune, who let out a shocked voice. She might be surprised at the sheer amount of plush toys. Or, she might me simply confused at the fact that it’s all Silent Sheep.

“Ichigo, what is going on? Also, why was there any need to come inside?”

“YES. I haven’t told you yet, but we are currently searching through this residence.”

“Searching?”

“The thing is, a rabbit snuck its way into the residence.” Right after Ichigo-san explained our current predicament, Konoe let out a baffled ‘Eh!?’ and looked at her in shock.

.....What’s this extreme reaction about? Does she actually know

where...

“Subaru, don’t tell me...”

“W-What’s that look for! I don’t know! I don’t know where that rabbit is!”

“Then, can we look around inside your room?”

“T-That’s...”

“Be honest, and confess. Hiding a suspect makes you a partner in crime.”

“No! That cutie isn’t a suspect...”

“Cutie?”

Konoe groaned like a child that had its toy taken from them. That’s exactly when it happened.

“Ah! You can’t come out!” An alto voice screamed.

Tracing Konoe’s gaze, I spotted an ashen colored living being on the bed. It had long ears with clear eyes, as well as long and fluffy fur. Yeah, it was a rabbit no matter how you looked at it.

“I won’t give it to you! You won’t get Pyonkichi!” The butler embraced the rabbit like it was her own child.

This is bad, she’s fully fallen victim to its charm. We have our first victim. If I had to guess, she probably encountered the rabbit on her way to or from the toilet. Also, Pyonkichi? Her naming sense is as messed up as always.

“Subaru, don’t be selfish. Hand it over.”

“No! I’m going to take care of it!”

“That rabbit might have run away from a nearby pet shop, you know?”

“Urk...No, I’m sure that Pyonkichi was excluded from his group of

friends, and sought out freedom which is why he escaped to the city at night...”

“Don’t turn him into the protagonist of some tragedy.”

“S-So what, Ichigo!? What do you plan on doing after you catch Pyonkichi!?”

“Did you know? In Australia, they turn rabbits into a satisfying meal...”

“Leave! Get out of here right now!”

“Just kidding. We’ll find a place for it to go after that. This is the order Kanade-ojousama gave us.”

“Urk...” Konoe grit her teeth, and reluctantly moved to hand over the rabbit.

Well, I can’t blame her for this, even if she seems a bit childish. It feels like that rabbit probably ran away from somewhere, it feels oddly calm around people.

“Farewell, Pyonkichi...Live on strong...” Konoe looked like she was close to breaking out in tears, looking at Pyonkichi.

However...

“Ah, wait!”

There, the rabbit broke free out of Konoe’s arms, and dashed down the hallway.

“Ahh, Pyonkichi!” Konoe was about to run after him immediately.

“Subaru, I don’t think it’s good to run down the hallways while looking like this. We’ll run after it, so you change first.”

“Urk...”

“Rest assured, we’ll capture him. Newcomer, Odd Jobs-san, let’s go.”

“Y-Yes...!”



“Ah, wait a second, stupid chicken!”

I chased after Ichigo-san, with Masamune close after me. Looking around...there it is. Down the hallway, I could see the ashen color!

“Ichigo-san, wouldn't it have been fine if Konoe tagged along?” I asked, while chasing the rabbit.

Since this is Konoe's home, she doesn't have to be that strict.

“NO. Knowing him, he might change his mind again. That's why only we will take care of the rabbit.”

“.....”

Did she give Konoe some false nonsense so that we have time to hunt for the rabbit? Just as Ichigo-san said, it wouldn't be weird for her to jump sides again.

“Hurry up, there's a dead end ahead.”

“U-Understood!”

As expected, we managed to corner the rabbit. It must have been wary of us, as its fur was standing on edge. Even if it's a rabbit, the fact that it emits this much hostility sure is scary. Just because it may look cute doesn't mean it's harmless. My dear little sister is a good example of that. It wouldn't be weird for this rabbit to pull a cobra twist on me.

“Calm down, Odd Jobs-san.” A robotic voice spoke up.

It's Ichigo-san. She's looking at the target with a calm but resolute gaze. Ohh, that's a maid for you, she's always calm and rational no matter the situation. Her eyepatch wasn't for nothing. Alright, I'll just listen to her orders, and...

“It'll be one shot with this.”

“Eh?” As I froze up, full of doubts, Ichigo-san took out a chainsaw from her skirt, and...Hey!?

“Time for conclusion. The enemy will be sliced.”

“Waaaaah stop that, will you!” I slapped down Ichigo-san’s hand that was holding the chainsaw.

“What are you doing, Odd Jobs-san. This is our chance.”

“Don’t joke with me! You’re being way too aggressive!”

“Rest assured, this is a dull chainsaw, so…”

“That rabbit won’t get out of this unscathed if you slam that chainsaw into it! I thought you’re just going to capture it?!”

“Injuries can’t be helped if we want to capture it.”

“Why are you being so forceful!?”

That’s not like Ichigo-san, who is always rational about things. Or, is this what I think it is…?

“Ichigo-san, are you…bad with rabbits?”

“…!?”

Masamune seemed to think the same as me, as she asked that question. Immediately after, Ichigo-san swallowed her breath, and she started stuttering.

“T-T-T-That’s not true at all!” She desperately denied our assumptions.

No matter how you look at it, Masamune hit the bullseye.

“Did you get bitten by a rabbit when you were a child?”

“Wha…how did you find out my top secret?” Ichigo-san froze up because of my question.

Bingo. That probably ended up as some kind of trauma. Eh? You’re surprised I found out this easily? I mean, the way she acts towards the rabbit is pretty much the same way I act towards Kureha. It’s like

I could smell her trauma from a mile away, and sympathized with her.

“A-At times like these, there’s only one thing to do...Remember the ‘A Guide On How To Keep A Pet Rabbit: Master It In 5 Minutes!’...!”

“What does that have to do with anything?”

“‘Step 1: Rabbits are carnivorous animals’.”

“You’re changing the contents!?”

“‘Step 2: Warm up a drenched rabbit into a microwave’.”

“All animal lovers in this world will curse you if you do that!”

“Step 3: Rabbits turn into suicide bombers if you get too lonely, pyon...’.”

“What a horrible way to die!”

It’s nonsensical. Ichigo-san is clearly not her usual self right now. If not, she wouldn’t run her mouth like this.

“N-No worries, I will fight.”

“Then, fight it yourself, I’ll be watching from here.”

“R-Roger...”

Maid versus rabbit, the battle of the century, held at the Suzutsuki Residence. The first one to move was the maid after all. She opened her arms wide, and slowly approached the rabbit.

“It’s fine it’s fine it’s fine it’s fine I’m not scared at all no need to worry no problem at all look at how cute this thing is I’m super okay and aaaaah it moved! It mooooved! I can’t! I caaaan’t!”

Aaaaand she lost it, huh. Like that, Ichigo-san just sank to the floor, looking up at me with teary eyes.

“I’m sorry.”

“.....”

“I’m actually terrified.”

“.....”

“Odd Jobs-san, I’ll leave the rest to you.” She said, and collapsed to the ground. What a blunder, to think the rabbit would take the first round this easily.

“Damn it...”

Can’t help it, Masamune and I need to take this battle home. That’s right, we are humanoids. It is said that our motoric abilities have been reduced drastically in the modern age, but when it’s the two of us, we should have no problem catching a small wild animal—

“...!?”

Right when the second match of rabbit vs maid and odd jobs guy (in costume) was about to begin, an impact—shook my body. My ally, Masamune, had leaped at my body.

“Y-You, what are you doing!?”

I protested immediately, but because I lost my balance, I fell to the ground. In the meantime, Masamune moved in front of me, opening both her arms as if to protect the being behind her.

“...I won’t hand him over.” She glared at me like a mother bear protecting its child. “I’ll be taking him in!”

“Wha!?”

Ahh, I remember. She really likes rabbits. When I was working part-time at the maid cafe before, I saw that her wallpaper on her phone was a rabbit. Damn it, I was wondering why she wasn’t saying anything. She was only waiting for me to show an opening.

“Calm down, Masamune! Do you plan on ignoring Suzutsuki’s orders!? At this rate, you’ll have your salary lowered!”

“I don’t care! I don’t need money if I can keep him!”

“Whaaaaaaat!?”

I-Impossible. What a dramatic development! To think that nasty rabbit prioritized friendship with an animal over monetary value! My level of affection for Masamune has suddenly risen drastically, it’s exploding!

“Why did you have to kick me for that though!?”

“Hmpf, I held back, so be thankful.”

“Traitor!”

“Shut up, stupid chicken! Look at how terrified this guy is, don’t you feel bad for him? He looks like he’s about to cry.”

“I’m the one who wants to cry!”

I feel like Jesus who just got betrayed by Judas. To think I was betrayed not even for 30 coins of silver, but for a single rabbit. How can I create miracles like this?

“Now, Pyonkichi, let’s run away together!”

She’s started negotiating with an animal!? However, she definitely is wearing rabbit ears right now, so maybe the rabbit feels some kind of familiarity...

“.....”

A bit of silence followed. As if it had decided, the rabbit started moving. Seeing this, Masamune showed a confident grin—However.

“Eh!? W-Wait, where are you doing!?”

For some reason, the rabbit headed my way. And then, it approached my cheek, gently licking it. It almost seemed like it was trying to console me.

“Why!? Why did you go to the stupid chicken!? I’m wearing bunny

ears!” Masamune flapped her bunny ears up and down.

That however seemed to have the opposite effect, as the rabbit moved even further back into my direction. What irked me the most was the fact that the rabbit didn’t even look at Masamune directly, but rather a bit further up...Oh yeah, this reminds me of the TV show I watched before.

“Hey, Masamune, this might be a bit random, but...certain animals can see things that normal humans can’t, right?”

“Huh? Where did that come from?”

“Just listen to me. For example, there are times when a cat suddenly stares at a corner of the room, right. Basically, we can assume that they might be staring at a ghost, or something else that is invisible to the human eye.”

“...What about it?”

“Maybe this rabbit sees something behind you?”

“Wha...”

Together with bewilderment, the girl staggered backwards. Since she’s living in a real haunted flat, she probably has a faint idea.

“T-That’s just a superstition!”

“Probably. But, you’re scared, right?”

“~~~!” The bunny-eared maid grabbed the hem of her apron dress, gritting her teeth.

It’s not that I just blindly believe this kind of talk. The show I was watching back then seemed pretty fishy to me anyway. However, the rabbit is currently fearing Masamune. Well, if I had to guess, the rabbit is probably just terrified of Masamune’s demonic face. Because...the smile when she approached it was hella scary.

“Alright then, I’ll go to Mount Osore, and get this thing exorcised.”

“That’s a bit fast, alright. Also, travelling to Aomori will cost you a lot, you know?”

“Urk...I don’t care. It’s for this rabbit!”

“I really feel like this guy will be given to a pet shop before you come back from Aomori.”

This is just my guess, but this guy probably isn’t just any ordinary rabbit. It has this noble feeling to it, like it had a long-lasting heritage. My bet is that it ran away from some shop.

“Stupid chicken.”

As I was lost in my thoughts, Masamune approached me on staggering feet...This is bad. Her expression looks mighty bad.

“M-Masamune?”

“Hey...hand over Pyonkichi, okay?”

“...!?”

There, Masamune moved on top of me. Waaah, what is she doing now!? Even though the fabric of the costume was thin, I could feel her soft body. If she’s sticking this close to me, my gynophobia will activate again.

“Or, let’s run away together?”

“R-Run away...”

“We’ll leave this place, together with Pyonkichi.”

“D-Do you really think that will work?”

“It’s fine, I’ll do something about it. Also...”

“...Also?” When I returned a question, Masamune’s cheeks turned beet red.

“...I’ll give you a kiss.”

“.....”

Stop right there, Masamune-san. Aren't you skipping a few steps here?

“D-Don't get the wrong idea! Only on the cheek, okay! It'll be like a reward!”

“A-A reward...!?”

“Not to mention, when I said ‘Kiss me’ before, you had such a happy face.”

“I did!?”

“I could even see a ‘Garter belts are the best’ face in there.”

“Your eyes have gotten crazy, that's all!”

Looking at people with such a biased view...Does she think garter belts are in my mind 24/7? I do dream about them from time to time, but that's about it.

“There's also that incident with Nakuru...”

“What's that supposed to mean?”

“T-That's...This is all for the sake of you not setting foot into the world of BL, okay! I'm not lying, you hear me!? Nakuru is relentlessly approaching you, right? As a result of that, you might awaken to BL! As your friend, I don't want that!” Masamune declared with an awfully desperate tone.

Yeah, not happening. Though I bet Nakuru is probably planning on brainwashing me into liking BL.

“That's why...Stupid chicken.” She called out my name with a feeble voice, and brought her face closer to mine.

Eek, so close! I'll get a nosebleed if you keep going like that!

“...Mm.”



Right in front of my eyes was the bunny-eared maid Usami Masamune. Although she tried to act tough, her lips were quivering ever so slightly. Slowly but steadily, she brought her face closer, with my world growing smaller. Right as her soft lips were about to touch my cheek—

“Jirou?”

There, an alto voice made Masamune stop in her tracks. Looking over, there stood Konoe Subaru who had changed into her butler uniform. She must have been chasing after us.

“Subaru-sama!?” Immediately after, Masamune leaped away from me.

...That was dangerous. I guess even that nasty rabbit is too embarrassed to kiss someone in front of other people.

“Subaru-sama! Help me! Let’s both protect Pyonkichi!”

Urk...Damn it, she immediately jumped sides as soon as Konoe got here. Now it’s two versus one, and I can’t negotiate anymore.

“...Sorry, Usami, that won’t work.”

“Eh...?” Masamune grew pale.

“Just now, the young lady called a nearby pet shop, asking if a rabbit ran away recently. As expected, they were looking for one rabbit, so an employee is coming over to pick it up.”

“T-That’s...!”

“That’s why, if you want to keep Pyonkichi...you have to buy him. If you pay the price, the pet shop will agree.”

“I’ll buy him! No price is too much! How much is he!?”

“.....” Konoe showed a troubled expression, and continued, albeit hesitating.

“50.000 yen.”

“...Excuse me?”

“Did you not hear me? It’s 50.000 yen, Pyonkichi’s price. He’s a Holland Lop, with a pure bloodline as well.”

“F-Fifty...”

“Can you pay that? Cash?”

“.....”

50.000 yen is too much for a high school student, especially for one who is already poor. Forced to accept this reality, Masamune started crying, bawling her eyes out like a child.

♀ × ♂

“Bye bye, Pyonkichi...”

Sending off the pet shop employee who came to pick up Pyonkichi, the bunny-eared maid waved her hand. This concluded the search tour through the Suzutsuki Residence. The invader was caught safely, and returned to the place it belonged. It undoubtedly was a happy end—except for a single maid.

“Uuuu...” Masamune’s eyes were teary at this farewell.

...Damn, she really is helpless.

“Don’t be so depressed, he just went back to the place it belonged.”

“...Yeah. But, he might be lonely all on his own...”

“It’s fine, I’m sure somebody will go buy him. And then, he’ll have a new home and a new family, so he won’t be lonely.”

“...Family...” Masamune muttered. “Y-Yeah, you’re right. With a new family, Pyonkichi won’t be lonely.”

“Yeah, I’m sure.” I nodded, to which Masamune’s expression cheered up a bit.

Thank god, she’s feeling better now. Leaving that aside however...

“How long are you planning on wearing those bunny ears?”

“...!?” Masamune covered her head with both her arms. “I-I just forgot to take them off!”

“They look good on you though.”

“T-They sure as hell don’t! I’m not happy even if you tell me that!” Masamune said, and blushed furiously.

“Usami, now that Pyonkichi is gone, I’ll be teaching you your job. The young lady gave me the order for this.”

“Ah, yes, Subaru-sama!”

“Good. Follow me.” Konoe walked down the hallway.

Masamune followed after him, and turned towards me for a split second.

“T-Thanks, stupid chicken.”

“Jesus...”

She really can never be honest with herself. If she’s happy about me cheering her up, she should just say so. Well, it’s the same as always.

“...Hm?”

There, I caught on to something. Ever since we caught and returned the rabbit, Ichigo-san has been practically staring at Masamune. I wonder why, maybe there’s something she wants to say?

“Odd Jobs-san, we’ll return to our normal duties.”

Seems like she caught on to my gaze, as she walked down the floor. What was that about? Don’t think it has any special reason, but...

“Well, whatever.” I stretched my back, and returned to my usual duties.

Today, I had to do some more cleaning. However, it felt like dinner time was approaching fast as well. Since we said we’d all eat

together, maybe I should get that done first and then move to cleaning...

“...Hm?”

There, right as I was deciding on my plans after this, my phone started ringing with the sound of the nursery rhyme ‘Rabbit’...Wait, that’s Masamune sending me a message? She should have returned to her own room by now. Maybe there’s something she forgot to tell me? I took out my smartphone, and checked the message I had received.

‘I forgot to tell you, but be careful around that maid...around Ichigo-san.’

“.....”

Um, what kind of ominous message is that? Some chain mail? I feel like that’s a bit too extreme.

“Also, it’s a bit too late for that.”

I know that Ichigo-san is hella dangerous. She’s a yandere, clearly violates weapon laws, and really hates my guts.

“Well, she still is my senior, so I don’t think there’s any reason to worry.” I muttered, using my common sense to arrive at this conclusion.

Right as I started walking down the hallway again—

“Odd Jobs-san.”

Talk about the devil. Standing down the hallway was Ichigo-san, who should have walked away by now. The time was moving towards evening, with a setting sun shining through the windows, illuminating her appearance blood red. In her hand, she held a small dust cloth.

“Emergency. Another problem arose.”

“Urk...”

Another rabbit? Please no, I don't want to see another furry monster. I'd rather not enjoy a second hunting time.

"However, it's a bit different this time."

"Different?"

"The job this time—is extermination. Not capturing, but exterminating. We can't let the target live."

"So what we did just now won't work? Is it troublesome?" I asked the girl, who slowly walked towards me.

In doing so, the girl's lips faintly rose to form a smile.

"YES. The target this time...is a harmful animal."

"Eh?"

I was about to ask just what exactly she was talking about, but my words were cut off. Ichigo-san used the small dust cloth—and pushed it onto my mouth.

"...!?"

Immediately after, I felt dizzy. Because of this sudden event, my consciousness started to grow hazy. All strength left my body.

"Good night, Odd Jobs-san."

Amidst my fading consciousness, I heard a faint robotic voice, with an odd emotion residing in it—until even that vanished.

---

1 Eel

2 A song by Shinji Tanimura.

3 Gokiburi, which means cockroach

4 Yomiuri Giants, a Japanese baseball team

5 I can, and it's shown in the manga/anime Terraformers

6 In Japanese mythology, Susano'o, the Japanese god of the seas, was the one who drove Amaterasu into the Celestial Cave. This caused the sun to hide for a long period of time. In order to get Amaterasu out of the cave the other gods threw a party outside.



# Chapter 5: Strawberry<sup>1</sup>

## Chainsaw

Thinking about it, all of this misfortune began when my house burned down. Having lost our place to stay, Kureha and I became temporary servants at the Suzutsuki Residence. What awaited me was a workplace even worse than any black company out there. A sadistic master, residents with personalities far too distinct and dangerous for my taste, and a storm of power harassment...That being said, this is clearly taking the top of it all, don't you think?

“Urk...”

Waking up from my slumber, I slowly opened my eyes. Because I had just woken up, my eyes still had to adjust, so everything around me looked blurry. I wanted to rub my eyes with my hands, but both my arms and legs were restrained.....The hell is going on.

Shaking my body, I heard a scratching sound. It seems like my arms and legs were tied to the chair I was sitting on with a solid rope. From an outsider's perspective, it might look like some 'Boy turned chair' or whatever, but this was no joke. The costume I was wearing not too long ago had been stripped off me, so I was sitting here in a shirt and pants.

Being tied to a chair like this reminded me of the hostage in a spy movie I watched not too long ago. Of course, he was tortured relentlessly shortly after. During the movie, he was eventually saved, but who knows if I'm that lucky?

“Damn it...”

My head still felt dizzy, but I tried my hardest to organize my thoughts. After my vision cleared up, I was finally allowed to check my surroundings, and found a familiar face—Suzutsuki Kanade. In this room, my master Suzutsuki Kanade was present. Posters on the walls, several plush toys, hugging pillows, sheets, handheld fans,



towels, mugs, shirts, the PC background, mouse pad, it was all the young lady. This entire room was buried with Suzutsuki Kanade goods.

The final nail in the straw was the bed in front of me, in front of the chair I was restrained on. Lying on the bed was the eyepatch maid, comfortably sleeping as she tightly embraced another big hugging pillow.

“.....”

I remember. After I split up with Masamune in the hallway, that maid, Saotome Ichigo, made me faint. She probably used some kind of sleeping medicine. Since Suzutsuki used that last summer, it wouldn't be weird for Ichigo-san to have that as well.

“Ehehe, Kanade-ojousama...” She muttered in her sleep, sounding as peaceful as all hell.

She's like a sleeping princess. If this was a nursery rhyme, a brave prince would come to wake her up with a kiss. As I was trained in that role (since I won it during the ghost leg lottery in grade school), I decided to become her prince, but tied up to a chair, that sadly is impossible. I am the restrained prince, and I have the worst possible princess.

“Hey, wake up.”

Instead, I decided on waking her up. This room probably belonged to her, so she should know what the hell is going on.

“Mmm...I can't eat anymore...”

“Yeah yeah, sure you're dreaming right now.”

“Munya...munya...”

“Never seen anybody actually say that during their sleep.”

“Zed...zed...zed...”

“This ain't a manga, so don't use 'ZZZ' as some onomatopoeia.”

This person is definitely awake, right. She's just making fun of me.

"Good morning, Odd Jobs-san. Since you wouldn't wake up at all, I fell asleep."

As proof of that, Ichigo-san now raised up her body, while still embracing the body pillow. Of course, a picture of Suzutsuki was printed on that pillow, not to mention it being about human-sized. I guess the goods are selling well.

"Um...Ichigo-san, can I ask something?"

"YES."

"Why are you doing this?" Even while asking this question, I tried my hardest to untie the rope, but nothing worked.

I guess I'm stuck here until someone frees me.

"...Hmmm." Ichigo-san thought about it for a second. "A new type of diet?"

"As if! Not even boxers go through this kind of torture!"

"It's fine, you'll lose weight soon enough."

"Lose weight...!?"

"I'll keep you tied to that chair for a solid two weeks now."

"Rational people call that death from starvation!"

This sounds like it could come straight out of a bizarre novel written by Edogawa Ranpo. Of course, I'm the victim and the corpse that is later discovered.

"That just now was more of a joke. In reality...I just can't stand you."

"That is quite the straightforward reason, alright."

"Because you're close with Kanade-ojousama. Until now, Kanade-ojousama never got that friendly with a boy."

“That’s...”

It’s because I found out about their secret, and she made me their partner in crime. However, I can’t tell Ichigo-san about this.

“That’s why, I’ll remove you from this residence.”

“R-Remove...”

“Rest assured. I’ll give you enough money that you can live elsewhere in the meantime. I’m not a demon myself, and I can offer you a home.”

“A home?”

“A luxurious tent.”

“So it still is a tent in the end!?”

“You don’t like it? When Nagare-san was chased out back in May, he gladly accepted the tent.”

“So you were the one who gave him the tent!?”

Back during Golden Week, a lot of stuff happened, and the old fart was kicked out of this residence, living beneath a bridge near the river, but to think she was the one who gave him that very tent. And good on the old man to even accept that.

“Calm down, don’t you need your master’s permission to kick me out?”

“I’ll just tell Kanade-ojousama that you went on a trip to find yourself.”

“That sure sounds fishy. Also, it’s not like I ever did something to Su...to the young lady. We’re just friends, nothing more.”

Some things happened during Golden Week, like the kiss for example, but that still doesn’t change the fact that we’re friends.

“...NO.” Ichigo-san fiercely shook her head.

From somewhere only lord knows about, she took out the dull chainsaw. An eerie **Brrrrr** sound rang out, as the engine of the chainsaw started up.

“I can’t believe anything you say. After all...you managed to tame Masamune.”

“Wha...”

Tame? I feel like I heard something similar before. I think it was Schrö-senpai, but why did Ichigo-san bring that up? Not to mention that she called her Masamune...

“Just who...”

“YES. Since this will be our last meeting today, I’ll teach you.” Ichigo-san continued with an expression devoid of any emotion as always. “I am the lowest in the Rouran Academy handicraft club’s ranking—and the club’s president, Saotome Ichigo.”

♀ × ♂

“C-Club president...!?”

Eh? Why? Wasn’t Ichigo-san supposed to be 29 years old...?

“You’re wondering about my age, right? What’s so weird about being a high school third-year at 29?”

“...Well, I guess.”

“Just to let you know, I wasn’t endlessly repeating this year.” Ichigo-san glared at me with an odd glimmer in her eyes.

Seems like I made her angry.

“I simply enrolled at the same time as Kanade-ojousama did.”

“Why one year above her?”

“She has Subaru in her same school year, so if two servants of hers stayed in the same year, it would be too much for her. That’s why I

enrolled as a third-year. No problems there, since I have a lot of work to do at the residence, I can barely attend school.”

“Why are you not being expelled from school?”

“All thanks to the influence of Kanade-ojousama’s father, the board president. He leaves behind grades needed barely for me to pass. Thanks to that, I can enjoy my student life as well, and I even made a club of my own.”

“So you’re the founder of that messed up club...”

“YES. I like handicrafts. However, I originally didn’t plan on making a club. It’s all Schrö’s fault. She was the selfish one.” Ichigo-san let out a sigh.

Oh yeah, Ichigo-san was the one who made this costume for me, right. Thinking about it, this is one type of handicraft. Although it has way too many functions if you ask me. Still, to think she’s the club president. However, there were clues.

‘Nice to meet you, newcomer.’

That was how Ichigo-san greeted me. However, when she talked to Kureha and Masamune, she used ‘Hello’ instead. Why did I not realize? I never thought a second about it, but if she knew Kureha and Masamune, then her greeting would naturally change. Still, she’s the club president? I always assumed the club president would be more like a gorilla.

“Newcomer, are you thinking something rude right now?”

“...Urk.”

“...Whatever, enough about the club.”

“But, can’t you split a concrete block with your fingers? That’s what Kureha told me.”

“That’s just a magic trick.”

“Magic trick?”

“With the right item and set-up, everybody can do that. I was just joking, but they immediately took it seriously. I myself am exceptionally weak.”

“So that’s why you ended up as the lowest rank?”

“That...is a NO. After all...”

“Yeah?”

“If I participated in that ranking match, I’d be killed. That’s why I skipped out on it entirely.”

“.....”

I see. I looked at her chainsaw again. Her main expertise is weapons, and there’s no way these would be allowed on school grounds.

“I get that you’re the club president of that handicrafts club. However, I feel like you were never that close with a fellow club member like Masamune.”

“YES. I rarely got any chances to talk with her during our club activities. Since I only participate from time to time, I leave most of the club to Schrö. Also, Masamune never talked to anybody in the club.”

“.....”

“Today is the first time I ever properly talked with her. That’s why I called her ‘Newcomer’.”

“.....”

Now their awkward exchange made sense, considering Masamune’s fear of strangers. I can’t see Masamune being able to hold a proper conversation with someone she just met. I thought that I was slightly improving her shyness of strangers, but it turned out to be the opposite. That’s right, it was simply because this wasn’t her first meeting with Ichigo-san.

“However, she’s changed.”

“Eh?” I froze up because of Ichigo-san’s sudden statement.

“According to what Schrö told me, Masamune’s opened up a lot lately. She’s been talking with the people from the club, which was to Schrö’s delight. Even today, although it wasn’t our first meeting, she talked to me.”

“.....”

“I asked Schrö. Asked why Masamune changed like this. Then, she told me ‘The change happened after she got closer to a certain student’. This very student—turned out to be you.”

“No, I didn’t really...”

“You didn’t do anything...is what you’re trying to tell me? However, it’s a fact nonetheless. And, that’s when I thought—You changed Kanade-ojousama.” With a voice cold enough to make my back shiver, Ichigo-san exclaimed.

“I changed Suzutsuki?”

“YES. Ever since she became a second-year, she started to enjoy going to school more and more. That has never happened before. Around that time, she also started talking about you more.”

“Talk about me...”

“They were absurd stories. That’s why I never paid them much mind. If she made a friend at school, then I’d be happy for her. And even if that friend turned out to be a man, then Subaru and I simply had to protect her...However, my assumptions were wrong.” Ichigo-san closed her eyes, almost like she was sad about something. “Recently, Kanade-ojousama has been acting weird. It looked like she was troubled about something, her expression seeming weak and fragile.”

“So...you’re saying that’s my fault?”

“I can only assume this to be the case. Whatever the method may have been, you changed Kanade-ojousama.” Ichigo-san declared.

Now that she mentioned it, Suzutsuki was acting off even from my

point of view. One big part of this is simply her referring to herself as 'Yamitsuki-san'. She also said that she had trouble falling asleep lately, which shows that she's worried about something. But, how is this related to me...

"Hey—Newcomer." As I was lost in my thoughts, Ichigo-san spoke up with her robotic voice. "Should I tell you the reason why I feel LOVE towards Kanade-ojousama?"

"The reason?"

"YES. The reason I deeply adore her is...because she is sharp."

"...What?"

"For example, the chainsaw. Or, the other weapons in my collection...they're dangerous, and sharp. I just love these kinds of things."

"....."

"That's why I fell in love with Kanade-ojousama. She is sharp. She may act like a gentle honor student on the outside, but deep inside, she is pointed, strong, and sharp. She's almost like an item out of my collection. That's why I decided to fall in love with her."

"....."

...This is bad. She's actually twisted. She might just be living out her interests, but the direction of this affection is absolutely messed up. Waaah, she's an absolute yandere, a psycho.

"However, the recent Kanade-ojousama is different." Ichigo-san ignored my silence, and simply continued. "Even though she had been so razor-sharp before...she changed. She may be trying to hide it, but this weakness born inside of her is growing. Like she's affected by an illness, she is losing her strength. I want to cure Kanade-ojousama...That's why." She said, and swung the chainsaw down towards my neck. "...Tell me?"

Luckily, she stopped right before it touched my skin. However, her words did not stop.



“How did you change Kanade-ojousama?”

“I-I didn’t do anything like that...”

“NO. You changed Masamune. That’s why, there’s a definite chance that you did something to Kanade-ojousama as well. Let’s strike a deal, okay? If you tell me about this method, I don’t mind letting you stay in this residence for a bit longer. However, if you won’t cooperate with me...”

**Brrrrrrrrrrr**, the chainsaw sped up even further. Hey now, are you kidding me? She’s seriously trying to torture me now?

“Waaah, wait a moment!” I desperately tried to reason with her.

I feel like a koi fish on the cutting board. Either that, or a tuna during a cooking show. I guess I’m still somewhat safe if she simply uses the chainsaw, but looking at her other tools, my life may be in definite danger. Now that it’s come to this, I need to convince her.

“Calm down! Didn’t the young lady say that I am her servant, as well as her friend!? You shouldn’t be torturing me, right!?”

“...Mmm.” Ichigo-san’s movement stopped after hearing my words.

This is my chance. If I pressure her further, she might even listen to me.

“YES. That does make sense.”

“R-Right? So, take this rope off me...”

“If so...then I have to change my approach.”

“Huh?” I let out a dumbfounded voice—and froze up because of the shock assaulting me.

With a rustling noise, Ichigo-san’s maid clothes fell to the ground.

“W-What are you doing!?”

There in front of me now stood a maid wearing nothing but

underwear. Not to mention that she was wearing super mature underwear.....Wait, this isn't the time to calmly analyze how her underwear's color was black, or that her garter belt was charming, and all that. I didn't need to be Einstein to guess what development was coming next.

“YES. If any physical approach is no-go, I'll move on to seduction.”

“You moron! Do you think such a honey trap method would work on me!?”

“I heard from Kanade-ojousama, you love maids, right?”

“!?”

“Not to mention that you hold great interest in garter belts.”

“L-Like hell I do! That's all nonsense—”

“So, should I take off my headband?”

“Of course not! If you take that off, you'll ruin your image!”

Ah!? Crap, I let my honest feelings spill!

“What an honest person you are. Then, how about I show you what a real maid is like.” She declared with a teasing voice.

And then, she put her hand on her eyepatch. I figured it was just some kind of fashion. I bet it was just for fashion, because her eyes were beautiful. Following that, she approached me, and gently sat on my lap. Of course, while facing me. And then...

“—Dear master.”

“!”

She tightly embraced me, whispering these words into my ear. This is bad. This is way too destructive, in a lot of ways. She's an actual maid, together with her soft body touching me all oveeeeeer! My brain is being turned to mush because of all the positive stimuli.

“Dear master, I have a request.”

“Ugh...!?”

Of course, there’s another huge reason why I’m suffering—My gynophobia. If she sticks to me this close, there’s no way it won’t activate. My nose will start bleeding soon enough, and she’ll find out about my embarrassing disposition...!



“Dear master...”

“Urk...Gah...!”

...N-No more. My consciousness was growing thin. At this rate, I'll suffer from a nosebleed, and pass out.

“\_\_\_\_\_”

However, oddly enough, a completely different image was floating inside of my head—The kiss. Maybe because I had a woman's face right in front of me, the scene from that night popped up in my head again. The sensation of her lips that should have vanished long ago, still remaining...

“—Ichigo!”

There, my consciousness returned. The door to the room swung open, and someone stormed inside.

“...Ahh.”

There's no mistaking that alto voice. It's Konoe Subaru, my best friend. To think she'd save me at a time like this.

“Subaru, aren't you supposed to knock before entering a room?”  
Ichigo-san was clearly cautious of Konoe, as she moved away from me, picking up the chainsaw.

I'm safe...All that's left is for Konoe to remove the rope on my body, and...

“Why did you come here?”

“The young lady said that she couldn't find Jirou anywhere, so she tasked me to look for him. When I passed by your room, I heard his voice from the inside.”

“So that's why you came barging in? You're as rough as rampant.”

“I don't want to hear that from you.”

“I won’t deny that. So, what do you plan on doing now?”

“Hmpf, that’s obvious. No matter how I look at it, Jirou’s in a pinch right now. That’s why I’ll save him.”

Sparks flew between the butler and the maid. Waah, why does this feel like some final battle? Am I some guy in a cinema watching a Hollywood movie? If they had a game with a concept like this, it might just blow up.

“Interesting. Are you saying you can win against me?”

“That’s my phrase. Don’t underestimate a butler.”

It was an explosive touch-and-go situation. A heavy and tense atmosphere filled the room.

“...Damn it.”

How pathetic, once again. Being tied up like this, I can only watch. Just how helpless of a role do I have...No, is there really nothing I can do? Wrong, there is. Even if I can’t move my body, I can use my voice. Ever since that kiss incident, it’s been super awkward between the two of us, but this isn’t the time to worry. I can at least cheer for Konoe, so that she won’t lose...!

“Y-You can do it, Konoe! I believe in you!”

“Urk...Y-You don’t need to cheer for me like that...” Probably because of that kiss, Konoe clearly blocked off my words.

Waaah, just talking to her makes my heart race. But, I can’t step back down now.

“What are you saying! We’re best friends, right!?”

“Eh...”

“That’s right! We are bound together by endless friendship!”

“.....!”

“Nobody can destroy the bonds we have!”

“~~~!”

“Yeah! We’ll always stay best friends!”

“.....~~~!”

For some reason, after hearing my cheering voices, Konoe looked like she had lost all motivation, almost like she was depressed about something.

“Maybe I should have properly told you last summer...” She said, crouched on the ground, and drew circles with her finger.

W-What is going on? Just when I wanted to support her...Maybe it’s because my words were just too lame, and she felt embarrassed? No, she looks more depressed than anything else.

“...Chance.” There, Ichigo-san dashed towards me like a wild beast.

Gyaaaa! Be careful, Konoe-san! This isn’t the time to be depressed! Your best friend is in a pinch!

“...Damn it.”

It’s all over now. THE END, yeah. Now that Subaru-sama is out of the fight, nobody can save me. At this rate, I’ll end up as fodder for the maid—

“Aren’t you in quite the predicament, Jirou-kun.”

There, a dignified voice passed through the room. When I looked towards the direction of the voice, there stood Suzutsuki Kanade. She smiled at me with her usual calm smile.

♀ × ♂

“K-Kanade-ojousama?”

With the arrival of her master, even Ichigo-san was bewildered, and stopped moving. And then she blushed furiously, saying ‘Oh my,

what appearance am I showing to my master!'. Now you're feeling embarrassed? Not a minute ago, you literally didn't care.

"Ichigo, would you mind freeing Jirou-kun? As I said before, he is a servant at my residence, as well as my friend." Suzutsuki ordered Ichigo-san with a dauntless tone.

For the first time in my life, I started to see Suzutsuki as a good person. To think that the devil would come to save me, I can't believe it.

"Well, I will compliment your style, tying him to the chair."

Hey.

"If it was me, I would have preferred some hot dish for him to eat as well."

Am I some late-night TV entertainer?

"Fufu, maybe even a hot tub with boiling water."

"Urk...I never even considered that."

Suzutsuki looked over at me with a sadistic glimmer in her eyes, whereas Ichigo-san just grit her teeth in regret. Save me, this residence is cursed. There will be a murder soon. Can someone call a detective here?

"Anyway, would you be so kind as to free Jirou-kun, Ichigo?"

"Urk..." Ichigo-san grew quiet in the face of her master's order.

She really is against the idea of freeing me, huh. Well, I can't blame her. Even so, this is Suzutsuki Kanade's order. She should just back down here, and...

"...I don't want to."

Surpassing my expectations, Ichigo-san ignored her master's order. She is rebelling against her.

“My, Ichigo, are you going against my order?”

“YES...I do, Kanade-ojousama. I cannot free Odd Jobs-san.”

“Why?”

“...Kanade-ojousama. You should understand. He will only bring you misfortune.”

“.....”

“I do not understand the reason, but the influence he has on you is making you suffer. As your servant, as your maid, I cannot ignore this. In order to resolve your worries, we need to remove him.”

“...I see. So, what are you going to do then?”

“...I will fight. Even if it has to be you, Kanade-ojousama.”

**Brrrrrrrr**, the chainsaw howled, pointed at her master.

“Wha...are you insane, Ichigo!?”

Konoe must have felt danger towards her own master, as she stood in front of Suzutsuki. Yet again, it was butler versus maid...However, shouldn't Konoe have trouble in front of a weapon like this...

“Subaru, step back.”

Surprising everyone, the one who stepped to the front rows was Suzutsuki herself.

“Y-Young lady?”

“What are you doing? I told you to step back.”

“However...”

“It's fine. I'm your master, so fighting a single maid of mine isn't a problem at all.”

“...U-Understood.” Konoe still didn't seem satisfied, but did as she was told.



“Kanade-ojousama, rest assured. I won’t hurt you.”

“Fufu, aren’t you relaxed.”

Saotome Ichigo and Suzutsuki Kanade, Maid and Master, were now facing each other. The curtains were about to be raised for a battle nobody could have expected.

“.....!”

This isn’t good. Even if Suzutsuki is clever and uses her tactics, she still is a girl with no fighting strength. Compared to that, Ichigo-san is the club president of that handicrafts club. Well, she’s probably more like a prince than anything, but that club isn’t normal at all. On top of that, Suzutsuki has another handicap—the chainsaw that was revving up in Ichigo-san’s arms. Although it was a blunt chainsaw which probably isn’t that dangerous, it was still a weapon. The question was...how could Suzutsuki fight against that...

“—Eh?”

However, with no warning whatsoever, the battle was decided with a result nobody could have expected.

“...!” A painful sigh could be heard.

Suzutsuki—collapsed. She fell to the ground, like a puppet that had its strings cut.

“Y-Young lady! What happened!?” Konoe rushed to her side as she screamed her name, but—no response came back.

It seemed like she had passed out...Hey now, are you kidding me? This isn’t like you, Suzutsuki. Is this just another one of your mischiefs? Right now, she simply looked like she was sleeping peacefully. This has to be some kind of technique that would force Ichigo-san to let down her guard. That has to be it, right? It’s enough, Suzutsuki. Your acting is way too good. Look at Ichigo-san, she’s gone pale, about to fall over herself. Even Konoe is shaking in fear. So, get up already, Suzutsuki.

“.....”

However, no matter how long we waited—Suzutsuki never got up.



<sup>1</sup>Ichigo means strawberry



# Chapter 6: Doesn't She Like You?

It was 9.36pm in the evening. Since Ichigo-san took Suzutsuki to the hospital, it's been around two hours.

"...Jirou, what should I do? What if something happened to the young lady..."

"Calm down, Konoe. First, we wait for Ichigo-san to contact us."

"But...but...!"

"It's fine, she'll come back just fine."

"T-That's right, Subaru-sama, we're talking about that Suzutsuki Kanade..."

We sat in the banquet hall, and as I was trying to console Konoe who still looked like she was close to breaking out in tears, Masamune came to support me. After Suzutsuki collapsed, we immediately had her brought to a nearby hospital. We considered calling an ambulance, but Ichigo-san said 'It'd be faster to take her there by car', so she took care of Suzutsuki.

In the end, Konoe and I were tasked to watch over the residence, and we forcefully called Masamune here while she was working. I feel like it would have been better if Konoe went with Ichigo-san, but she said 'If something were to happen, it'll be just you two newcomers, and I can't rest easy with that', so Konoe had no other choice but to wait here. Though, I feel like a big reason for that was to avoid Konoe creating a panic.

However, I can't blame Konoe. After all, her master collapsed, right in front of her eyes. If I was her servant, someone living in the same house as her, I would have been much more shocked, for sure. Judging from what Ichigo-san's guess was—namely anemia—Suzutsuki should be back on track soon enough, but getting checked

out was always the safest choice.

“...Jirou?”

Konoe probably was unable to bear with the silence, as she called out to me with a worried voice.

“Do you have any idea?”

“Idea?”

“Was she acting off before she collapsed...or was there any sign of her collapsing...”

“.....”

Konoe still must have felt awkward because of the kiss incident, as she constantly averted her gaze from me. Since I’m no doctor, I have no way of knowing how she’s really doing, but she mentioned that she was lacking sleep. Or more accurately, something inside of her was going on. She suddenly declared herself as the Yamitsuki-san, reaching the point where even Ichigo-san was worried. Suzutsuki said she was worrying about something. There’s way too many mysteries here.

Her sudden declaration as Yamitsuki-san, the sudden arrival of Masamune. Just why...did she invite her natural enemy Masamune here as a servant? And she now collapsed. If I didn’t know any better, I’d guess that she was just playing around again, but it sure didn’t look that way.

Judging from what Konoe said, the members of the Suzutsuki Family are receiving a medical investigation every year, so she probably did not catch any grave disease. Ichigo-san’s guess was probably accurate, and she just collapsed because of anemia. She probably didn’t take proper care of herself...or she couldn’t because she was too exhausted?

Unlike me and my gynophobia, this seemingly was the first time she passed out like this.

“...Sorry, I have no idea.”

“Stupid chicken, are you serious?”

“I am. I have no idea. What about you then?”

“...I don’t know either...” Masamune showed an apologetic expression.

“I see...” Konoe said.

...Damn it. Isn’t there any hint? I feel like we’re lacking the pieces for this puzzle. Isn’t there anybody else who knows Suzutsuki—

“Huh? What are you all doing here?” A childish voice reached my ears.

Looking over, there stood Kureha in her maid uniform. I see, we forgot to tell her what happened to Suzutsuki. She probably just got back.

“Nya, club practice turned out longer so I got home late. So, what is going on? What’s those gloomy faces for? Where’s Onee-sama?”

She must have guessed our gloomy atmosphere, as she raised one eyebrow.

“Kureha-chan, the thing is—”

“No, wait a second, Konoe.” I stopped the girl before she could explain the circumstances.

...That’s right, there’s Sakamachi Kureha. She calls Suzutsuki Kanade ‘Onee-sama’, so maybe she knows something? Something we don’t...

“Kureha, be honest with me.”

“Yeah, what’s up?” She tilted her head in confusion.

With Kureha, it’s better to just be honest and straightforward.

“Did you realize anything weird is going on with Suzutsuki lately?”

“With Onee-sama?”

“Yeah. Anything is fine. Her acting weird, or something like that...”

“Hm...” Kureha thought about it for a moment. “There is one thing that changed.”

“...! Really!?”

“Yeah. Though in fact...Nii-san, you haven’t realized?” Kureha said it like it was obvious.

Nice one, my little sister. I didn’t expect that, but I’ll gladly take it. Depending on your answer, I’ll become your punching bag later.

“Please tell us, Kureha-chan.” Konoe pleaded after listening to us.

“Eh...But, I don’t think I should be the one to say it...”

“Please, we need your help right now.”

“Konoe-senpai...” Probably because it was Konoe pressing Kureha, she gave in. “I understand. However, this is just my intuition, so remember that.” She said, while grabbing the hem of her skirt. **“I feel like...Onee-sama has found someone she likes.”**

“.....What?”

Hearing Kureha’s words, my thoughts came to a stop all-together. Same goes for Konoe and Masamune. Suzutsuki Kanade...has someone she likes? I mean, she’s a high school student, and in the middle of her adolescence, so having a crush isn’t anything weird, but...

“Who’s that unlucky bastard?”

Being liked by that rich lady can only be hell. Konoe let out a bothered ‘Hmph’ but I ignored that. She probably was annoyed because I was bad mouthing her master, but let me say that. I know best how bothersome she can be. Imagine being her lover? She’d tease you every single day, making up nonsense.

“...Nii-san, you really don’t know?”

“Hell no I don’t.”

“.....” Kureha grew awfully quiet.

Maybe it’s someone I know? Could it be...Konoe? She did say that Konoe was her first love. Though, that would feel like a forbidden love alright. Not to mention master and butler. But, who else?

“Well...” Kureha took a deep breath, and then looked at the three of us.

She spoke like it was an obvious truth, and yet what followed was—

**“Doesn’t Onee-sama like you, Nii-san?”**







# Afterword

It's been a while! The next volume will come out in two months, June, written by me, Asano Hajime!

First, I'm sorry to suddenly throw this announcement at all of you. However, I don't have many pages left for this afterword, so I'll be going at it as I see fit. High pace as always, even with releases.

Finally, the [Mayo Chiki!] series has reached its 7th installment, and we even have some overlap with the spin-off [MayoMayo!] in the shape of the guest character Ichigo-san, so for those people who are still interested, I highly suggest you go grab a copy and finish it with a moonsault press on the cash register!

Now then, onwards to my thanks. First, my editor Shouji-sama, I'm very sorry for all the trouble I caused this time around! Without your help, this volume would not have turned out how it has right now, so thank you very much!

Next up is my illustrator Kikuchi Seiji-sama, who has provided wonderful illustrations as always. Every time I look at your illustrations, my motivations grow exponentially, so thank you very much!

To the editor-in-chief, everyone from the editorial department, the proofreader, the designer, everybody involved in printing and publishing, the authors that helped me run away from reality with alcohol, NEET-sensei who is responsible for the comicalization, Eichi Yuu-sensei who is responsible for the spin-off [MayoMayo!], everybody who is helping with the anime adaptation, and of course all my readers, thank you very much. It is thanks to all of you that we managed to reach seven whole volumes with [Mayo Chiki!]. You have my heartfelt gratitude.

Now, it's time for the news corner. The upcoming volume eight and the second part of the Suzutsuki Residence Arc will be released in June. Our protagonists are bewildered because of Kureha's

announcement, and something weird is going on with the young lady!? The story will only pick up from here on out, but we won't be straying away from its romcom elements either.

At the same time, the manga adaptation of [Mayo Chiki!] has reached its second volume, which will be released in June as well. NEET-sensei, thank you very much, seeing the characters like that truly is an honor.

Following this, the [MayoMayo!] spin-off which has been releasing in the [NyanTYPE] magazine (under the Kadokawa Imprint) will also receive its first compiled volume in June! Thank you very much, Eichi-sensei. It tells the story of Subaru, Kanade, even Ichigo-san, and all the other characters that I could only name in this volume, so please check it out.

Now then, while hoping that we get to see each other again, I will be stepping on the gas with no breakfast in sight, so please continue to support me.

Asano Hajime



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